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History of the Congress Socialist Party

BY

P. L. Lakhanpal

with a foreword

BY

Com. Prem Bhàsin M. A.

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National

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TO

**"All those who have undergone
any suffering for the sake of their
Motherland—India—And
My Little Active blithe sister
"USHA" but for whom this
book may never have seen
the light of the day."**

letter " enhances the value of the book greatly. I do not feel any hesitation in saying that Mr. P. L. Lakhanpal by writting this book has rendered a valuable service to the cause of the C. S. P. and his book is indispensable to any student of Indian Politics. I congratulate him on it and hope that the second edition of the book, will be still better and also enlarged.

Bradlaugh Hall,
Lahore.
2-10-1946.

(Sd)- PREM BHASIN,
M.A.

INTRODUCTION

BY

The Author.

The Congress Socialist Party has been the spearhead of the leftist elements in the Congress ever since its formation. It has always been considered by the sane elements, within and without, to be a valuable asset to it. Its role within the Congress as well as without that premier national organization has been the one it could rightly be proud of. The part played by its members in the 1942 struggle has further added a glorious Chapter to its already glorious history. Throughout the country the mass public opinion has swung on to its side and the C.S.P. has become a household word and still one that is held in high esteem everywhere in the country.

Never before has it been more beloved of the Nation. Never before there has been such a great curiosity about it—**desire to know its history, policy and programme.** And still there has not been published much of literature about it. It was to meet this demand of the public that I embarked upon the task of writing this book—**History of the Congress Socialist party.**

It is written primarily for the students of Indian politics and others of pro-socialistic views in the country or those who want to know something about the C.S.P. My object in this book has been to provide the reader with an authentic though at points brief account of the

background of its formation, its activities, and its policy and programme from 1934 to the present day. Though myself a Congress Socialist, I have tried to be as unprejudiced and independent an observer and narrator as possible. I however believe that much improvement could be effected still in the book and would welcome and be thankful for any suggestions on this point from those who feel interested.

In the end I grasp the opportunity to express the overwhelming gratitude I owe to Prof. Tilak Raj Chaddha M.L.A., Munshi Ahmed Din, and Comrade Prem Bhasin for the assistance and encouragement they have rendered me in the task of writing this book. I am also deeply indebted to Professor Brij Mohan Lal Sharma, Sardar Harbel Singh, Corporal Altaf Hussain and Sergeant M.H. Bhatta of the R.I.A.F. for their valuable suggestions and assistance in the collection of the material.

Lahore
October 2, 1946.

(Sd.) P. L. LAKHANPAL

CHAPTER I

THE SPLIT AND THE NEED

The splitting and factions in any organization are normally considered deplorable. They are calculated to undermine its influence, weaken its strength and hamper its progress. But it is the spirit and nature of the splitting and factions that determines their influence upon it. Instead of being detrimental to its interests they might prove beneficial and actually a blessing in disguise. They might mark the advent of a new spirit, and adoption of a new policy in the organization that may make it healthier, stronger and more broad based than ever before.

Considered from a broader and unprejudiced point of view, the splitting is quite a natural and normal process, and factions equally normal products thereof. A right wing, a left wing and a centre are the natural morphology of any big vital organization. Where such a morphology of diverse views and tendencies is not given or is not articulate in any organization, three things are to be inferred. Firstly the organization in question is still an amorphous mass which awaits being formed into the definite pattern of a living body, or secondly, it has become a dead and decomposing body after having functioned as a living pattern presenting a diversity of organization, or lastly that it is for the time being dominated over by a single influence whether of a person or group, which suspends the normal and legitimate working of all diverse limbs, and in single sovereignty runs the whole show. In other words all the

powers that he have become vested in a supreme dictator. In this last sample the virtual one man's show may be more or less masked under a ceremonial cloak of false democratic constitution. A legislature with the usual right, left, and centre, with the usual comfortable distribution of portfolios and sharing of a so called joint responsibility may still be there under a dictatorship. Under its spacious wings autocracy may cover a multitude of fictions. Normal and legitimate functioning of all the three components without fear of prejudice or favour alone represents a really democratic institution. Instead of serving as a pull back it rather gives an impetus to the progress of the organization. Sometimes when the bolder spirits try to drag it at a pace which is too fast for the leadership—the centre and its supporters—the right wingers—a crisis becomes inevitable. That particular group flowers into prominence and serves as an eye sore to the laggards and go-slow colleagues. When it decides to be firm on its stand, have a new specific policy and programme, and carry the rest along with it, it is alleged to be creating a split and weakening the strength of the organization. This of course is seldom the case. The strength is not decreased but increased. The Congress Socialist Party too, has been subjected to much criticism on the same count. Many wild and totally unjustified allegations have been brought against it. Even the very propriety of forming such a party has been questioned. While the need for its formation is explained else where in this chapter, and the proper answers to the criticism and allegations also given there, it will suffice to say that the party lives unharmed, and is recognized by all sane elements in the

country as a valuable asset to it. To-day it is synonymous with the type of ideal Independence for India.

II

Ever since the moral ascendancy of Mahatma Gandhi in the year 1920, over the political horizon in the country the History of the Congress has practically been one man's show. Mahatma Gandhi has been the Congress and the Congress Mahatma Gandhi. This Gandhian era continued right from 1920 to 1938. In 1938 with the coming of Subhas Bose it appeared to be on its decline. It however resumed its previous state before long. Though at present the leftists are stronger than ever before, and there are independent spirits in the Congress this era continues still. Mahatma Gandhi still wields a tremendous influence over the Congress and his opinions are not only respected but also considered as law by the majority of those having their sway in the party. Fortunately this one man's show has proved to be though not an absolute but still a preponderating good. The amorphous mass of gradually forming Indian political consciousness, and steadily growing political travail has been fortunate in that it has been able to organise itself into an efficient machinery of national service and national effort round a nucleus of such moral and spiritual potency as the life and personality of Mahatma Gandhi. Without such a powerful centre of inspiration and lead, co-ordination and control, it would most probably have remained more or less an amorphous and chaotic mass, and to that extent an ineffective and inefficient machinery. Mahatma Gandhi's influence has hastened the process of efficient organization, just as electric charges do the condensation

of water vapours and formation of rain clouds. It has also arrested the process of premature disruption in which the centri-fugal forces prevail over those that tend to keep to the centre, in which elements make more for war than peace.

But an arrangement like this of unquestioned beneficence within limits and upto a certain stage, has a tendency to outgrow its utility. In this way Dictatorship which proves a strong rope to raise the drowned hopes of the country may also prove an equally strong rope to hang them with. It may continue to drag the country along a path, which though quite suitable and beneficial to it some times past is not the proper one for the present. This requires change and this necessitates evolution of a new era with a new policy and programme.

III

Mahatma Gandhi has been the central sun of the Congress ever since the year 1920. Right from 1920 to 1934 this sun remained at its zenith and dominated the sphere unquestioned, and unobstructed.

The Gods of the Congress did indeed shine mainly by the light and moved mainly by the power of the central sun of Gandhiji's personality. Still by no means all of them were dolls and dummies. A. C. R. Dass or a Pandit Motilal Nehru was a luminary that would not only adorn the political firmament of any country but also profoundly influence the destinies of any people. Such gods never shine in altogether borrowed light or move in altogether delegated power. A Pandit Jawahar

Lal Nehru, or a Subhas Bose today to name only the two prominent stars—though there are many others—have never been dolls and dummies nor will ever suffer themselves to be. They have been good *Chelas* (pupils)—good and faithful without allowing themselves to be made in the image of the *Guru*—Teacher. Their voice has not always been the voice of the master. They have schooled themselves into discipline but not into acquiescence by the Sabramati or Pondicherry or any other school. There has been great incompatibility of temperament between the one and Mahatma Gandhi, and the second even when in the Congress raised more often than not a discordant note to the policy of the central sun, criticized it bitterly and led the opposition against it. He did not even mind rebelling against this central sun.

But such gods have been the exception and not the rule. The common run of Congressmen have had—even to this day to some extent—their own lights not only dimmed but practically extinguished by the light of the central sun. They have not only hidden their lights under a bushel of modesty but also smothered them under a pall of surrender. The pall has fortunately been a moral pall which has rendered the surrender into a kind of passive dignity. It has not spread itself over a coffin of dead political mummies or dummies. Live men and women have been under a moral spell without being either mummies or dummies. Those that are in reality so—and there are lot of them in every country—have been made to stimulate life in the magnetic field of the central sun like the dead frogs made to twitch their legs under the galvanic current. In other words countless men and women who under

normal conditions of Indian Temperature and pressure would politically count for nothing have been so electrified by the central sun as to become positive dynamic factors exerting their own pull in the general Indian advance. They have not been merely dead stones and gravel lying inert about while the caravan is going on. They have at least been the dogs barking. The Congress would not conceivably be the power and show it was without such mass electrification. High voltage wires are certainly needed for mass electrification in the country. But they can also serve the purpose of electrocution and hence the workers ought to be careful.

Under the influence of the central sun, the sphere has acted as one more compact and more perfect than would have been possible under the existing conditions of a politically unborn India being born into nationhood. The Congress has been the one organized political body of any importance functioning in India. Its all India operations whether constitutional or otherwise have been characterized by that forcefulness of purpose and solidarity of plan which are the marks of a great and efficient organization, and exercised no mean influence upon the bureaucratic machinery of the Government of India.

But Mahatma Gandhi and his staunch followers have indeed sought to make the movement a movement essentially of moral and spiritual regeneration. They have had political and economic objectives and programme also but of a more or less circumscribed nature. Great emphasis has been laid upon nationalism and the attainment of Purna Swaraj—Complete Independence. Tantalizing references

have been made to the emergence of the Ram Rajya after the elimination of foreign domination.

But Nationalism by itself offers no solution of the vast problems that confront our country and the world. It ignores indeed the world and fails to realize that in doing so it makes proper understanding of the national problems impossible. The very fact that great economic and social questions cry almost as loudly and insistently for solution in those western countries which are nationalist to the core, of their beings, as in India proves conclusively that Nationalism by itself is no solution of India's social and economic questions. Nor is it an adequate solution of her political question itself because such a solution is an impossibility without a partial solution of her social and economic questions and it is only by going beyond Nationalism that these questions can be solved.

Modern political and economic battles are not fought and won so easily by the sermons on the mount or even perhaps by the Bhagwad Gita. A clear cut, specific, well organized, and well designed programme is necessary for that.

Present is the age of anti-imperialism. Our main task in this age is to end imperialism and win national independence. But this should be real Independence. Not a mere transfer of power from one imperialistic hand to another. It is gross mistake to believe that the elimination of foreign domination would end our ills and restore us to Ram Rajya. Foreign domination might go but grinding poverty and other social problems shall remain unsolved if the transfer of power is under the existing state of affairs. Age of National reconstruction should commence soon as the era

of freedom dawns upon the Indian horizon. This can be done only on Socialistic lines. Socialism alone can provide an Ideal Independence. Leftism is synonymous with Anti-imperialism or Socialism. There should be no compromise with imperialism and no wavering and vacillation in the struggle against it.

This fact has impressed itself upon the minds of several prominent independent thinkers both in the Congress and outside. Speaking so far back as in 1931, at Karachi, Subhas Bose declared in unmistakable terms that a socialist republic based on Indian conditions alone could provide a real solution of the problems of the country. Organization of peasants, labourers, and students was emphasized. Need and urgency of the transfer of power into the hands of labourers and peasants, and proper distribution of National wealth among all was stressed. Adoption of a bold uncompromising policy in the struggle against imperialism, regardless of all dangers, difficulties and obstacles was advocated.

It was the realization of these problems and facts that gave rise to the formation of Socialist Parties in the country. The Socialists within Congress also considered seriously the proposal of forming a party within Congress, to exercise its influence on the general organization and to make it adopt a socialist programme. Particular conditions in the country described elsewhere precipitated the formation of it. The first All India Socialist Conference was held at Patna on the eve of the A. I. C. C. Meeting. A detailed account of it is given in the ensuing chapter. The decision to form an all India Congress Socialist Party was taken. It was formally inaugurated at Ready Money Terrace

Worli Bombay on October 20, 1934. Much wild and unjustified criticism was levelled against it. To those who still hugged belief in sentimental appeals as a result of their inability and failure to diagonalize the nature of weakness, it appeared to be splitting the Congress. They made capital out of it and tried to prejudice the uniformed sections of Congress against it. They even appealed sometimes in plaintive terms to preserve the national solidarity.

Needless to say all their fears were unjustified and unfounded. The Socialists were perfectly justified in their stand. By reason of inevitable inherent contradiction and conflict between the interests of the land holding and capitalist classes on one hand and the masses on the other, no single appeal which can satisfy both the possessing few and the exploited many is possible. They were right in asking the Congress to choose between the few and many.

The path they had adopted, although calculated to offend certain numerically insignificant classes, was the path which led the country to a better understanding of the problem, a path which followed would make Congress really and truly an organization of the country.

Regarding the controversy about the formation of such a party within Congress, no opinion would be better and more representative of unprejudiced and independent thought than that of Subhas Bose—the immortal hero and beloved son of India. Speaking at the Hari Pura Session of the Indian National Congress he said :—

“ There has been a great deal of controversy over the question of forming a party like the Congress Socialist

Party within Congress. I hold no brief for it and I am not a member of it either. Nevertheless I must say that I have been in agreement with its general principles and policy from the very beginning. In the first place it is desirable for the leftist elements to be consolidated into one party. Secondly a leftist bloc can have *raison d'être* only if it is Socialist in character. There are friends who object to such a bloc being called a party, but to my mind it is quite immaterial whether you call that bloc a group, league or party. Within the limits prescribed by the constitution of the Indian National Congress it is quite possible for a leftist bloc to have a socialist programme, in which case it can be very well called a group, bloc or party. But the role of the Socialist party or any other party of the same sort should be that of a left wing group. Socialism is not an immediate problem for us.....Nevertheless, Socialist propaganda is necessary to prepare the country for Socialism when Political freedom has been won. And that propaganda can be conducted only by a party like the Congress Socialist Party which stands for and believes in Socialism ".

The Congress Socialist Party has become a household word every where in India to-day. It can raise its head with pride for the role it has played and the contribution it has made to the cause of the Motherland. It has rendered valuable services to both the Congress and the country in general. The part played by its members in the 1942 struggle has proved conclusively that it is in no way second to any party in making sacrifices. The members are not mere Doctrinaires but they also know how to act. Throughout the length and breadth of India, the general public opinion and sympathy

has swung on to its side. 1942 has added lustre to its glory.

History of the birth and growth of this party is the object of narration in the following pages. These few pages have been written only to explain the justification for the formation of this party within Congress. Now commences the romance of the formation and growth of it.

CHAPTER II

BIRTH

I

The first all India Socialist conference was held at the Anjamen-i-Islamia Hall Patna on the eve of A. I. C. C. Session, on May 17, 1934, under the presidentship of Acharva Narender Dev of Kasi Vidya Peeth. It was attended by over hundred prominent delegates from all parts of India. Majority of the delegates were against the newly revived Swaraj Party. They however were not all no changers. Nor did all of them have the same attitude of hostliity towards the question of council entry. Bombay Socialist group for instance had openly accepted the electoral activity as part of the Socialist programme, and on that programme carried the Bombay Congressmen's Conference with them recently. Nevertheless majority of them had been disturbed by the revival of the Swaraj Party. The principal object of the Conference also was to decide the attitude to be adopted and the role to be played by the Socialist delegates in the A. I. C. C. Session to be held the next day.

Grave issues and problems confronted the country. The civil disobedience movement was practically finished and withdrawn. Only a formal cancellation of it remained to be announced. This too was to be announced by the A. I. C. C. the next day. The Swaraj Party had been revived and had decided on the programme of council entry. Joint Parliamentary Committee had published its report and made it the target of country wide criticism

in India. Change or no change ? Compromise or no compromise ? Council entry or Boycott ? These were the widely divergent alternatives and issues before the country. The Swaraj Party had already given its verdict in favour of change, compromise and council entry. At this stage for a proper understanding of the back-ground of the conference, a short history of the Swaraj Party and its revival is necessary to be narrated. Its revival had a profound influence upon the political situation in the country.

In 1920, A. I. C. C. decided on the policy of boycott of councils. This was accepted and hailed by a majority of the nationalists and gave the country a new thrill. None could miss seeing the wonderful manifestation. A wave of unprecedented political consciousness and enthusiasm surged over the masses throughout the country.

But with the suspension of the civil resistance movement after Chauri Chaura incident, council entry programme came and crystallized itself in the formation of the Swaraj Party which received the recognition of Congress and in 1926 actually took charge of the Congress organization. Its activities between 1922-30 are well known and need no narration. In 1930 on the instance of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru the leader of the Congress Party in the Assembly the boycott of legislatures was resumed. From 1930 to 1934, the Swaraj Party remained in abeyance. Though it was not dissolved by any resolution of the Congress, nor did it dissolve itself by its own resolution, yet to all intents and purposes, during all this period and in early 1934, it was considered

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a dead body. There, however, remained still a body of Congressmen—though practically insignificant—who did not like resumption of boycott and wanted the council entry programme to be carried on.

With the virtual suspension of the civil resistance movement, a move was made by some of the pro-council entry programme elements to revive the Swaraj Party. A meeting of the leaders was held in Delhi on 31st March 1934, under the Presidentship of Bhola Bhai Desai. Forty delegates invitations to whom had been issued by Dr. M. A. Ansari attended.

Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr. K. M. Munshi was the origin of this leader's conference. Invitations to the delegates had also been issued on the strength of the same. The letter expressed the opinion that the decision of Poona Conference could not be altered till an honourable settlement was arrived at with the Government, but that those who wished to chalk out a supplementary programme should do so and that Gandhiji would welcome it. Assurance to the delegates who doubted whether A. I. C. C. would approve of their decision, that Gandhiji had no objection to it, was also given on the strength of the same letter by Dr. M. A. Ansari, the convener. "It would prevent political crisis in the country" was his opinion.

After an exhaustive examination of the political situation in the country, the general opinion of the Conference was embodied in the following conclusions.

1. In the opinion of this conference the All India Swaraj Party which has been in abeyance since 1930,

should be revived in order to enable Congressmen who are not offering Satyagraha to undertake through an organization constructive programme as contemplated in the Poona settlement.

2. In the opinion of this conference it is imperative for this party to take up the Government challenge in relation to the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Assembly to secure the election of its candidates on the following lines.

- (a) To implement the country's mandate to get all the repressive laws repealed.
- (b) To reject the proposals contained in the white paper and to get them replaced by the national demand on the lines indicated by Mr. Gandhi at the Round Table Conference, so that the country may reaffirm its confidence in the Indian National Congress.

These conclusions were resolved to be placed before Gandhiji for his blessing and Dr. M. A. Ansari, Bhola Bhai J. Desai and Sir P. C. Ray were requested to carry out this will of the conference—consult him on the issue and get his approval.

The will of the conference was done. The deputation had an easy victory over Mahatma Gandhi. On April 7, 1934, immediately after the conclusion of the meeting of the Swarajist Deputation he issued a "historic statement to the country." This statement in his words was the result of "an intense introspection, searching of the heart and waiting upon God. In it he asked the Civil resisters to "learn the art and beauty of self denial and voluntary

poverty." They must engage themselves in nation building activities—the spread of Khaddar, fromation of communal unity, and removal of untouchability. On the same day Dr. Ansari issued a statement on the parleys of the Swaraj Party with Mahatma Gandhi :—

"With his characteristic generosity he has cordially welcomed the revival of the Swaraj Party and has endorsed the decision of the Delhi conference to take part in the forthcoming elections to the Assembly. He considers it right and the duty of Congressmen who are not offering Civil resistance and who believe in work in legislatures to prosecute the programme which they believe to be in the interests of the country. He goes even further and promises at all times to render such assistance to the Swaraj Party as lies in his power to give." He added.

"This whole hearted and spontaneous support of Mahatma Gandhi has happily removed all chances of opposition and division within the Congress. It has further made certain the co-ordination and co-operation of different groups of Congressmen. I feel confident that with the revival and reorganization of the Swâraj Party and the placing of a practical, effective and dynamic programme of work before the Congress and the country, it will be possible not only to remove the political inertia and sullen discontent among the intelligentsia and the people, but also demonstrate that in our campaign against the dual policy of the Government, namely repeal of the repressive laws and rejection of the white paper constitution along with the placing of the national demand, we have the entire support of the whole country behind us".

Dr. Ansari was wrong in assuming that it had made certain the co-operation and co-ordination of different groups of Congressmen. The Swaraj party represented a defeatist mentality. Its so called constructive programme could not have escaped foundering on the irremovable rock of the bureaucratic regime. It also was not a satisfactory programme. The birth of the Congress Socialist Party showed and proved that.

On May 2nd and 3rd the Swarajists held another conference at Ranchi. About hundred Congressmen, some of widely divergent views attended. The object of convening the Ranchi conference was primarily to take the necessary steps to make the newly revived party pulsating and living again as before.

The conference also adopted a lengthy programme to be adopted by the Swaraj Party. It however was not primarily a common man's programme. When Mr. M.R. Massani urged it to undertake the organization of peasants and workers for the purpose of participation in the struggle against imperialism and Indian vested interests allied with them, his proposal was defeated by a considerable majority of 40 to 26. This clearly demonstrated that party's programme was merely one of social reform and not that of socialism. No such programme could satisfy the masses, and provide an adequate solution of the problems of the people in the country.

It was quite clear and evident now that unless opinion was organized within Congress, the A. I. C. C. would satisfy Mahatma Gandhi's opinion. There was left only a

He regretted the absence of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru their leader in jail, but was sure that Pt. Nehru would hail with delight the birth of the new socialist party they proposed to form. The President also explained that they had met a day before the A. I. C. C. session to decide on the proposals to be placed before the A. I. C. C. on behalf of the socialists.

Dealing then with the question whether they should organize a party independent of the Congress he declared himself in favour of keeping within Congress as "a socialist" in his opinion "will and should never refuse to join the fight for independence carried on by the lower middle class if he can thereby succeed in overthrowing the foreign domination. A capitalistic democracy is any day preferable to serfdom and subjection to alien rule."

He emphasised the dangers of the new situation whereunder imperialism was making zamindars and other Indian capitalistic elements its junior partners. The need of the Indian democratic movement was the alliance between the lower middle class and the masses. "It is the intelligentsia alone" said he "that can organize the masses for disciplined action. The Congress is not helping the working classes as is apparent from the fact that the Bombay workers strike conducted so heroically is not receiving the Congress support or even sympathy".

He deplored this attitude and condemned it strongly. After laying emphasis on the dangers of it he said, "What is required is the co-relation of forces and as most of the labour in towns is drawn from the villages these workers

can and would become the standard bearers of revolution in the villages" After describing the crisis brought about by the capitalistic system, race of armaments and tariff war Acharya Narendra Dev said :—

"The only two alternative solutions are fascism and socialism. The Italian fascism though attractive in theory has not been established as a corporate state, while the Nazi movement is only an alliance between the lower middle class and the capitalists to suppress socialism. The only solution for the world is socialism. The Russian experiment has proved successful".

He then claimed that the socialism had come to stay in India but said that most of the socialists in the Congress were mere intellectual socialists. In his own words :—

"The Socialism has come to stay in India. But most of us in the Congress today are mere intellectual socialists. But as our long association with the national struggle has repeatedly brought us into intimate contact with the masses, there seems to be no danger of our degenerating into mere theorists and doctrinaires. "We should avoid dogmatism and sectarianism. We must take our stand on scientific socialism or social reformism."

Acharya Narendra Dev also announced that socialist committees would be formed in various provinces so that by the time the next Congress met, they should form an All India Congress Socialist Party. While he favoured an early special session of the Congress because the present members of the A. I. C. C. did not represent the country

as they were elected in 1931; he did not think that they would be justified in insisting that the question of council entry be considered only by a full Congress session.

Defining the socialist attitude towards the Swaraj party he opposed its autonomous existence as he feared that deprived of the healthy influences of a revolutionary movement, the Swarajist organization in course of time would become a pucca constitutional reformist body and develop a mentality which will run counter to the revolutionary policy of the Congress.

The policy adumbrated by the new party was quite different from that of Mr. Dass and Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. They had outlined a policy of constitutional opposition from within the Congress and were against the acceptance of office. The new Swaraj party did not enunciate any such policy. It was admittedly a reformist body. It had no obstructive tactics to its credit. Even the Constituent Assembly which they proposed to formulate the national demand seemed only another edition of the liquidated all parties conference. Acharya Narendar Dev exposed all these aspects of the newly formed party in a creditable manner and then after having delivered an elaborate address in which numerous questions had been dealt with, he resumed his seat and asked the conference to proceed with the work.

Resolutions Adopted.

After considerable debate the conference passed by a large majority the following resolution.

"This conference is of opinion that the resolution passed by the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress calling upon Congressmen to boycott the legislatures should not be rescinded except by an open session of the Congress. The conference is also of opinion that if the Congress at its next session rescinds the resolution, the conduct of electoral and parliamentary activity should be in the hands of the congress organization and such activity should be in furtherance of a programme which is socialist in action and objective".

2. A. I. C. S. P.

Then came up the resolution for the formation of the Congress Socialist Party. Mrs. Rajani Mukherjee of Bengal at the very outset raised a dissentient voice when it was moved. She did not favour the forming of such a party within Congress and was of opinion that if they were sincere they should form a party outside Congress. When put to the vote however the proposal was defeated by a majority of 58 to 22 and the original resolution which ran as follows was adopted

"In the opinion of this conference the time has come for an all India organization of the Socialists in the Congress to be established. With this object in view it is resolved that a drafting committee consisting of the following be appointed to prepare the draft programme and constitution for an All India Congress Socialist Party.

(1) Acharya Narendar Dev—President (2) Jai Prakash Narain—Secretary and (3) C.C. Bennerjee and (4) Faridul Huq—members.

(b) It is further resolved that Shri Jai Prakash Narain be appointed the organizing secretary of the All India Congress Socialist conference to organize provincial Congress Socialist groups where they do not exist on the basis of the programme adopted by the drafting Committee and arrange for an all India conference to form an all India Congress Socialist Party, immediately prior to the next session of the India National Congress."

3. Textile Strike.

A resolution extending the sympathy and support of the conference to the textile strikers in Bombay was also adopted. Firing at the E. I. P. colliery at Girdhi on the peaceful labourers was also condemned.

4. Mr. Massani's resolution.

Mr Massani then moved a resolution giving a direction to the socialist delegates to move certain resolutions at the A.I.C.C. in connection with the Swarajist and Socialist Programme.

The resolution concerning council entry constituted one part of the mandate. The second ran :—

"Whereas the preamble to the fundamental rights resolution of the Karachi Congress declares that in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions; and whereas in order to widen the basis of struggle for Independence and ensure that even after Swaraj comes the masses do not remain victims of economic exploitation it is necessary that the Congress should adopt a

programme that is socialistic in action and objective, the All India Congress Committee recommends to the Congress to declare as its objective a socialist state, and after the capture of power to convene a Constituent Assembly on the basis that every adult shall have a vote with the exception of those who have opposed the struggle for freedom and that representation shall be on functional basis for the purpose of formulating a constitution for an Indian state on the following political, social and economic principles.

1. All power to be transferred to the producing masses.

2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the state.

3. Socialization of the key principal industries, steel, cotton, jute, railways, shipping, mines, banks, and other public utilities with a view to the progressive socialization of all instruments of production, distribution and exchange.

4. State monopoly of foreign trade, production, distribution and credit in unsocialized sector of economic life.

5. Elimination of princes, landlords, and all other classes of exploiters.

6. Redistribution of land to peasants.

7. Encouragement and promotion by the state of co-operative and collective farming with a view to the ultimate collectivization of all agriculture in the country.

8. Liquidation of debts owed by the peasants and workers.

9. Adult franchise on functional basis.

The all India Congress Committee recommends the method of organizing the masses on the basis of their economic interests as the only effective method of creating a mass movement, and the organization by Congressmen of Kisans and Mazdoor Sanghs where they do not exist for the purpose of participating in the day to day struggle of the masses and with a view to lead them eventually to their final goal."

Moving the resolution Mr Massani said that they had no objection to a Council entry programme. He however laid down the conditions on which the Socialists could lend their support to such a programme as follows :—

"1. The programme should be sanctioned by an open session of the Congress and not by a handful of men.

2. the Parliamentary activity should be under the guidance and control of the Congress.

3. The Programme should be full blooded socialist Programme."

From what he could see the Swaraj Party stood only for constitutionalism without any mass programme. He could visualize how the Swaraj Party would degenerate into responsive co-operation. He also suggested that if the Socialists were defeated at the A. I. C. C. they should pursue the struggle to the open session of the Congress and challenge the right of the A. I. C. C. to decide in favour of the Swaraj Party.

It was an important resolution. Heated discussion ensued. Several amendments were moved. Mr. P. Ghose moved that the Socialist Party should give a mandate to every member of the party no matter whatever his personal views to back the resolution in the A. I. C. C. Session the next day. Mr. Bal Krishna Sharma accepted the position that the A. I. C. C. was competent to sanction the Council entry programme. Mr. Kiran Das in an amendment asked the C. S. P. to urge the Congress to fight for the rejection of the white paper, the repeal of the repressive laws, the release of prisoners and detenus and the early summoning of the open Congress Session to discuss the Socialist programme to be implemented by the party that runs the elections. Mrs. Rajani Mukherjee moved an amendment that the control of the economic life should be with the workers and labourers so that the fruits of their labours be consumed by themselves and not by other capitalist parasites as they were at present. All of these amendments were debated over by the delegates and lost except that of Mrs. Rajani Mukherjee which was appended to the original resolution.

5. No Socialist to be member of any communal organization.

Mr. P. Tricum Das of Bombay then moved a resolution proposing that no Socialist could be a member of the proposed Swaraj Party or any other communal organization. The resolution was adopted and the amendments urging a wider application by the deletion of the words "proposed Swaraj Party" and adding the words "with the economic programme" after the Swaraj Party were lost.

6. Last Resolution.

The last resolution affirmed faith of the conference in the efficacy of direct action as a weapon for the attainment of Independence and congratulated those among the masses who had suffered for the cause.

The conference concluded at 9 at night. A Subcommittee was formed to draft the text of the proposals to be placed before the A. I. C. C. Meeting the next day.

IV.

The A. I. C. C. met the next day. The Session lasted for two days and concluded on May 19th 1934. As was expected there was made a formal announcement of the cancellation of the Civil Disobedience movement. Speaking in Hindi when asked to move the resolution by President Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mahatma Gandhi gave his unequivocal support to the Swarajists and blessed their programme. In a lengthy and elaborate speech he dwelt upon several issues that were uppermost in his mind. His speech was a queer mixture of philosophy and realities. Though himself having no belief in the legislatures as an instrument for obtaining Swaraj, he allowed the Swarajists to follow their proposed programme and even asked the others to lend them their sympathy and support. To deny the recognition of their programme, in his opinion was to refuse to make use of the talents the country possessed.

The resolution said "In as much as there exists in the Congress a vast body of the members who believe in

the necessity of entry into legislatures as a step forward in the country's progress towards its goal, the A. I. C. C. hereby appoint Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Dr. Ansari to form a Board with Dr. Ansari as President to run and control elections to the legislatures,"

The board consisted of 25 members and had wide powers. Normal members of the Congress were not permitted to obstruct its activities.

As had been decided in the previous day's conference Mr. Siri Prakash, a Socialist delegate, moved an amendment that the decision of the Lahore Congress resolution imposing a ban on Council entry should not be rescinded except by an open session of the Congress and elections should be run on the basis of the Socialist programme.

The amendment was seconded by Acharya Narendra Dev who strongly pleaded for the adoption of Socialist programme, which would take the country forward towards the goal of Swaraj and appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to give blessing to the New Socialist ideal and policy. He strongly objected to giving a blank cheque to the Swarajists on the basis of the programme they had proposed.

The amendment however could not be carried. The influence of the central sun of the Congress was too great to let it have an easy passage. The defeatist mentality that pervaded the right wingers could not accept such a proposal. There was strong sentiment amongst them against the Socialists who appeared to be taking

way the dictatorial powers that they had been wielding since long from their hands. The working Committee was especially exclusively right winger and objected strongly to that. It was still a far off day for the Socialists to have their first victory. The amendment was lost. Other Socialist amendments were also strongly objected to and lost.

It is a well known truism that none wants to part with power he has in his hands. Autocracy is incompatible with democracy. The growth of democratic spirit in a land where autocracy reigns is a death knell to it. Elements clinging to medieval outlook on life dislike modernism. The Working Committee and the right wing so far had been used to an autocratic sway over the country. The Congress Socialist Party threatened to wreck this rule and eliminate it altogether. Naturally they closed up their ranks and started a concerted campaign against the new party which was still in its infancy. Statements based on absolutely wrong and unfounded facts were issued. The statement of the Working Committee issued after its session in Bombay on June 18, 1934, may be quoted for an illustration. It ran :—

“Whilst the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it is necessary in view of the loose talk about confiscation of private property and necessity of class war to remind congressmen that the Karachi resolution as finally settled by the A. I. C. C. at Bombay in August 1931, which always

lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation of private property nor advocacy of class war. The Working Committee is further of opinion that the confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence. At the same time the Working Committee is of opinion that the Congress does contemplate wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent the exploitation of the landless poor and also contemplates healthier relationship between the capital and labour."

It was a painful surprise. Such baseless allegations could not be reasonably expected from a body which was at the helm of the country's affairs. Such gross distortion of facts, and misleading of the public opinion was not only shocking but also extremely painful. The statement in itself betrayed a miserable ignorance of the real position. Acharya Narendra Dev, Mr Sri Prakash, Babu Sampurnanand and Mr. Jai Prakash Narain issued a joint statement answering the one of the Working Committee on June 22, 1934, from Benares.

Repudiating the charge of loose talk they very rightly said that it was not on their part but on the part of the Working Committee.

So far the confiscation of private property was concerned, no such decision had been taken by the Socialist conference held at Patna. The only thing aimed at was the progressive socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange. A gradual abolition of all private property in these spheres alone was the object and not the abolition or confiscation of all private property.

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It was indeed a most surprising assertion that confiscation and class war were against the creed of the Congress—non-violence. They could not be and they were not. It was equally meaningless to talk of the necessity of creating class war—a thing which already existed. It was not a question of creating or setting up the war. It was that of which side to take, that of the oppressed or the oppressor. The Socialists had decided to side with the oppressed rather than the oppressor and they aimed at a classless society.

The programme that the socialist had enunciated at Patna, was also a programme to be followed after the Independence had been won. The Congress Working Committee from the point of view of an unprejudiced observer was getting wild for nothing. Its statements aimed at nothing else but to prejudice the general public opinion against the Congress Socialist Party. The tactics adopted to achieve the end were nothing short of being unseemly. But that was but natural. The Working Committee was influenced greatly by the vested Indian capitalist interests. It was not the mouthpiece of the masses though it pretended to be, but that of the capitalists. In its own words it had wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent the exploitation of the landless poor and also contemplated a healthier relationship between capital and labour. A healthier relationship? One could very rightly ask if the attitude adopted by it towards the Bombay textile strikers was also aimed at that? Between capital and labour? Two things:

quite asunder and impossible to be put together without resort to socialism. It was indeed nothing but loose and extremely vague talk. There can be no single policy which can satisfy both the exploited many and the exploiters few. To aim at it is to follow or attempt to follow the policy of trying to please all and thus succeed in pleasing none. This deliberate offensive was the herald of numerous others of its type. But such offensives are the natural fate of any and every new organization. The C. S. P. too took it in the same spirit and carried on its activities.

The child was born. The atmosphere for its growth was favourable. Its near ones however tried their level best to make it unhealthy. The early life of this baby was actually full of hardships. But these hardships hardened and strengthened it also. It grew up in the normal course of time into a healthy and strong organization capable of braving all odds and holding its own against all concerted efforts.

The constitution of the party and what it stands for is described in the succeeding chapter. Its gradual growth is also described in the same chapter. It is sufficient to state here that the independent-socialist groups that were functioning in Bihar, Bombay and other parts of the country decided to join the A. I. C. S. P. and end their autonomous existence.

The C. S. P. was a living body now. All attempts at the shattering and destruction of it were doomed to failure. They are prominent only for their failure and for strengthening the organization.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT IT STOOD FOR.

The first open session of the All India Socialist Conference, at which the All India Congress Socialist Party was formally inaugurated, was held at Ready Money Terrace Worli Bombay. It commenced on Oct 21 and concluded on Oct 22, 1934. It was attended by over 150 prominent Congress Socialist delegates from all parts of the country. They included Dr Ram Manohar Lohia of C. P., Mr. Marcarrenes of Bengal, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain of Bihar, Babu Sampurnanand and Mohan Lal Gautam of U. P. and Messrs Achuyat Patwardhan, Massani and Desh Pande of Maharashtra and Mrs. Kamla Chattopadhaya of Bombay. The welcome address was delivered by Mr. Purshotam Dass Tricum Dass while the conference was presided over by Babu Sampurnanand.

The political atmosphere in the country was stuffy and unhealthy at the time. The white paper based on the Joint Parliamentary Committee report had upset the balance. Opinion about the report was divided in different schools of thought. The Nationalists regarded it as nothing short of death warrant while the reactionary elements were jubilant over the concessions that had been conceded to them. It was a charter of slavery. Policy of divide and rule was practised skilfully, systematically, and ruthlessly. Different Communities were separated and put into watertight compartments. There was no tangible transfer of power to the masses and still to neutralize

whatever even there was, this device had been resorted to. The Federal Scheme was even more hopeless. The country had actually been forcibly dragged to the thirteenth century. Medieval policy of mixing up of religion with politics was revived. Communal award was sent down with all its grace or otherwise. Naturally there was an uproar of protest against the proposed constitution from all parts of the country.

Mr M.S. Aney and Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya organized a new party known as the Nationalist party on July 31, 1934. The object of this party was to combat the communal award. It in fact was itself founded on communalistic basis. It condemned the communal award as a grave wrong had been done to the Hindus. The speeches of some of its members actually smacked of religious intolerance and religious prejudice against the Muslims and in favour of the Hindus. Instead of easing the communal tension the new organization complicated and worsened it.

The Congress Socialist party was still in its infancy. It was subjected to a volley of criticism and attack from all sides—specially from the no changers. It did not care for them. It had a clear cut and well defined policy of its own. Its view was not obstructed by any delusions and its actions married by any incompatibility between its pronouncements. About fifty of its prominent members held a conference at Benares on October 1, 1934 under the presidentship of Babu Sampurnand and condemned the formation and activities of the new Nationalist party and resolved not to participate in the Congress in contesting the elections to the new legislatures. This meeting how-

ever was held just to combat the organized propaganda being carried on against the party. Detailed decisions on various issues were taken by the open session of the A. I. S. C. which was held about three weeks later.

Mr. P. D. Tricum Dass in his welcome address drew the attention of the delegates to all the issues political and other that perturbed the nationalists' mind at the time. In a learned address he also described the socialists who had gathered there as those representing the elements who having fought for nearly *three* years and having realized the limitations both ideological and organizational inside that great body—the Congress—were asking for a clearer understanding of the nature of the national struggle, so that they might not allow the weakness which had been revealed during the last four years to continue to hamper their march forward. "Mistakes are made even by the wisest and most far sighted" asked he. "But is wisdom also to admit and profit by those errors? An ostrich like policy of shutting your eyes and pretending that all is well has never done good to any body." Concluding he warned the audience against placing any faith in the bonafides of the British intentions. "Independence can never come as the result of gift or compromise" said he "And if it does it will be a variety of the Greek gift to Trojans. Independence shall have to be won. And complete and real independence can come only by complete severance of all British connections".

There was departure from normal conference conventions when Babu Sampurnanand—the President—asked it to commence the work without delivering any presidential address.

Constitution

The constitution of the Socialist party as drafted by the drafting committee appointed at Patna was considered at great length.

Mr Batliwala moved an amendment that instead of having the object of the party as achievement of complete Independence, it should be further explained by adding the words "in the sense of total separation from the British Empire." He also urged that the object of the party should be the establishment of a workers republic instead of a society.

The part I of the amendment was accepted by Mr. Massani who was speaking on behalf of Mr Jai Prakash Narain. A "workers society" however was considered to express the intention quite explicitly. The amended clause stood as:—"The object of the Congress Socialist Party is the achievement of complete independence, in the sense of complete separation from the British Empire and the establishment of a workers society."

Members.

"The party shall consist of the members of the Indian National Congress who are not members of any communal or political organization, whose objects are inconsistent with those of the party," An amendment proposing the contribution of 5000 yards of yarn per Annum as a condition for membership was lost.

Provincial Parties

By another amendment it was decided that there shall be affiliated to the Congress a socialist party in every

province including the Indian states. Four anna levy for membership of provincial parties was reduced to one anna. It was further decided that disciplinary action against the members and local parties could be taken by the council only by 2/3rd majority.

Plan Of Action.

The plan of action required the party to work within the Indian National Congress with a view to securing the acceptance of its programme by the main body. The objects and programme of the party were laid down as follows :—

1. The organization of, and entry into the peasant and labour unions for the purpose of participating in, and developing the day to day economic and political struggle of peasants and workers, and of creating a powerful mass movement for the achievement of Independence and Socialism,
2. Active opposition to all imperialist wars and the utilization of such other crises for the intensification of the national struggle.
3. Refusal to enter at any stage into negotiations of constitutional issue with the British Government.
4. Convening after the capture of power of a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of formulating a constitution for India, on the basis of adult franchise and on the lines proposed by Mr. Massani.

Independence.

What the Congress Socialist Party meant by the expression Independence was defined in a resolution as :—

"Independence must mean the establishment of an independent state wherein all power is transferred to the producing masses, and such objective involves refusal to compromise at any stage with the British imperialism". There was also passed a resolution defining the fundamental rights as adopted by the subjects committee.

Swaraj—What It means

The conference adopted a resolution defining what the term Swaraj implied for the masses. It ran :—

"The conference is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what Swaraj, as conceived by the Congress, will mean to them it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understandable by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include the real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress therefore declares that the future constitution of the Indian state shall be based on the following fundamental principles.

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Planning and controlling by the state of the development of the Economic life of the country.
3. The Socialization of the key and principal industries as steel, cotton, jute, Railways, shipping, mines, banks and other public utilities.
4. The organization and encouragement of the co-operatives for the production, distribution and credit in the unsocialized section of the Economic life of the country.

5. The state monopoly of foreign trade.
6. The elimination of princes and land lords and all other classes of exploiters.
7. The redistribution of land to the peasants.
8. The encouragement and promotion of co-operative farming with a view to ultimate collectivization of all agriculture in the country.
9. The liquidation of all debts owed by the peasants and labourers.
10. Providing of work to every able bodied adult by the state and social insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident and maternity etc.
11. Adult franchise on functional basis.
12. To every one according to his needs, the basis of the distribution of the national income.
13. Neither support nor discrimination of religions by the state.
14. No recognition of any distinctions based on caste or community.
15. No discrimination between the sexes.

Workers Demands.

"The conference is also of opinion that the daily struggles of the peasants, workers and the other exploited masses for their immediate economic political demands, are an integral party of the struggle for Independence. The conference therefore resolves that the peasants, workers and other exploited classes should be organized for the immediate realization of the following among other demands.

1. Freedom of speech and the press.
2. Freedom of association and combination.
3. The repeal of anti-national and anti-labour laws.
4. The release of all political prisoners and the prisoners detained without trial.
5. The instalment of all farmers and peasants, deprived of their lands due to their participation in the National movement of Independence.
6. Free and compulsory primary education and liquidation of all adult illiteracy.
7. Drastic reduction by at least 50 percent in the Military expenditure of the Government of India.
8. Municipalization of the public utilities.
9. The control of usury direct or indirect.
10. Introduction of a steeply graduated tax on all incomes including incomes from agricultural sources above a fixed minimum.
11. Freedom from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.
12. The right to form unions, to strike, and to picket.
13. Compulsory recognition by employers of the workers unions.
14. Granting of a living wage.
15. Introduction of a forty-hour week, providing of healthy quarters and conditions of work.
16. Equal wages for equal work.
17. Weekly payments of wages wherever demanded.

18. Insurance against sickness, accident, old age, maternity etc

19. One months leave with full pay, every year to all workers.

20. Two months leave with full pay to women workers during maternity.

21. Provision against employment of children of school going age in factories, and women and children in underground mines and other hazardous occupations.

22. Elimination of landlordism in zamindari and Talukdari areas.

23. Abolition of all feudal and semi-feudal levies on peasantry.

24. Encouragement of co-operative farming.

25. Introduction of scientific agricultural indebtedness and the arrears of rent

26. Establishment of land mortgage banks to grant cheap credits to the peasants.

27. Complete exemption from rent and taxes of all peasants with uneconomic holdings.

28. Substantial reduction of rent and land revenue.

29. Freedom from attachment in the execution of rent or money decrees of homestead, agricultural resources and that portion of peasants holding which is just sufficient to maintain an average peasants family.

War And India.

Opposition to the participation by India in any war in which the British Government might be involved was

expressed in a subsequent resolution. The resolution also urged the Congress to undertake forthwith the preparation of the entire Indian Nation to resist actively the utilization of Indian men money and resources and to utilize such crisis for the securing of Swaraj.

Indian States.

The resolution about the Indian states said :—

"In as much as the Indian states constitute a principal political, and military support to the British imperialism, and a source of feudal backwardness and reaction, this conference declares that the abolition of the rule of the Indian princes can alone assure the complete Independence for the whole of India and invites the people of the Indian states to fight side by side with the people in British India in the struggle for Independence."

**"No C. S. P. Member to become an
office bearer unless."**

A subsequent resolution adopted by the conference said, :—

"This conference is of opinion that no member of the C.S.P. should become an office bearer in any Congress organization except where the organization concerned has resolved to carry out the party's immediate programme of work as indicated in the draft programme of the All India Congress Socialist party and the executive committee of the provincial Congress Socialist party gives previous permission to accept office ; and calls upon those Congress socialists who are office bearers in any organization whose programme does not conform with that of the C.S.P. to

give up their office". The formation of the so called Nationalist party was also condemned in another resolution as it was both communalistic and Anti National.

Communal Programme.

The conference's resolution about communal programme was both interesting and admirable. It struck a new note and sought to make a new approach to the question. It said :—

" This conference is of opinion that all attempts made so far to solve the communal problem, including those made by the Congress and the position taken up by the Congress Working Committee on the question, have been on the wholly false bases of the recognition of the rights belonging to the religious groups, and is therefore of opinion that the problem can effectively be liquidated only through the struggle for the economic emancipation of the masses."

" Working Committee and attacks from the Right wing."

The attitude of the C. S. P. towards the recent Working Committee resolution and the attacks made on it by the right wing was expressed in the following resolution.

" This conference is of opinion that the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress at Bombay and later at Benares concerning the confiscation of property was both uncalled—for and misleading. This conference claims that the participation

in class war and advocacy of expropriation of property are not inconsistent with the Congress creed.

" This conference also takes note of the concerted attempts of the right wing to take back the Congress to the old discredited path of constitutional agitation and to convert it into an instrument of the Indian upper classes in their bargains with the British imperialism, which run counter to the creed of the Congress and the fundamental principles and policies it has been following since the year 1920.

" This conference resolves to resist these attempts and to rescue the Congress from the hands of the right wing by educating and organizing the rank and file on the basis of a clear cut programme of national revolution and also resolves to carry on a consistent propaganda for the exposure of the reactionary aims, policies and programme of the right wing."

Parliamentary Programme.

A clear cut programme of Parliamentary activity was laid down in the resolution about the parliamentary programme. It read :—

" This conference is of opinion that the parliamentary activities conducted in the name of the Indian National Congress, shall be based on the theory of the revolutionary use of the legislatures with the following as its essential principles.

1. The Congress condidates shall go to the legislatures as the representatives of the exploited masses in India and in no other capacity.

2. The activity within the legislatures shall be closely linked up with the activity of the masses outside carried on the basis of their immediate economic demands.

3. Every issue coming up before the legislature shall be approached and dealt with from that point of view—the economic and political emancipation of the masses forming the only criterion.

4. The least betrayal of the cause of the exploited masses shall forthwith meet with expulsion and merciless exposure.

5. No selected Congress candidates shall accept ministerial office because

(a) The legislative, executive, and judicial machinery—the present and the forthcoming is the creation of the British imperialism and is intended solely for the purpose of facilitating and intensifying the exploitation of the Indian masses.

(b) The acceptance of ministerial office will create a dangerous illusion that the imperialist state machinery can be utilized for the good of the masses, while its essential structure is so designed as to automatically result in their exploitation.

(c) A mass organization that stands for complete independence as its immediate objective must necessarily remain in opposition until complete independence is an established fact.

- (d) The economic and political emancipation of the masses is incompatible with the imperialist and capitalist structure of state and society.

Whereas the decision of the A. I. C. C. at Patna for contesting the present Assembly elections is not on the lines indicated in the past, the decision be rescinded and the Congress candidates withdrawn. The conference also calls upon the Provincial Socialist Parties to take disciplinary action against such of the members as may contravene the basis of this resolution."

Party's Attitude towards other Parties

Party's attitude towards other parties and the main body of Congress in regard to the carrying out of its programme was expressed in the resolution reproduced below.

"In view of the urgent necessity of carrying forward the fight for independence and preventing the further spread of demoralization, it is resolved that the Congress Socialist Party shall forthwith commence work with the object of putting its programme into effect irrespective of its acceptance or rejection by the Indian National Congress.

"For this purpose the Congress Socialist Party desires to act in co-operation with other parties having similar aims, within or without the Congress.

"It also authorises the Executive Committee to appoint a Sub-committee to explore the possibilities of joint action on specific issues with the different labour and radical groups in the country.

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2. The activity within the legislatures shall be closely linked up with the activity of the masses outside carried on the basis of their immediate economic demands.

3. Every issue coming up before the legislature shall be approached and dealt with from that point of view—the economic and political emancipation of the masses forming the only criterion.

4. The least betrayal of the cause of the exploited masses shall forthwith meet with expulsion and merciless exposure.

5. No selected Congress candidates shall accept ministerial office because

(a) The legislative, executive, and judicial machinery—the present and the forthcoming is the creation of the British imperialism and is intended solely for the purpose of facilitating and intensifying the exploitation of the Indian masses.

(b) The acceptance of ministerial office will create a dangerous illusion that the imperialist state machinery can be utilized for the good of the masses, while its essential structure is so designed as to automatically result in their exploitation.

(c) A mass organization that stands for complete independence as its immediate objective must necessarily remain in opposition until complete independence is an established fact.

- (d) The economic and political emancipation of the masses is incompatible with the imperialist and capitalist structure of state and society.

Whereas the decision of the A. I. C. C. at Patna for contesting the present Assembly elections is not on the lines indicated in the past, the decision be rescinded and the Congress candidates withdrawn. The conference also calls upon the Provincial Socialist Parties to take disciplinary action against such of the members as may contravene the basis of this resolution."

Party's Attitude towards other Parties

Party's attitude towards other parties and the main body of Congress in regard to the carrying out of its programme was expressed in the resolution reproduced below.

"In view of the urgent necessity of carrying forward the fight for independence and preventing the further spread of demoralization, it is resolved that the Congress Socialist Party shall forthwith commence work with the object of putting its programme into effect irrespective of its acceptance or rejection by the Indian National Congress.

"For this purpose the Congress Socialist Party desires to act in co-operation with other parties having similar aims, within or without the Congress.

"It also authorises the Executive Committee to appoint a Sub-committee to explore the possibilities of joint action on specific issues with the different labour and radical groups in the country.

" It further directs the Executive Committee to appoint them following three Sub-committees to carry out the programme of the party efficiently.

1. Propaganda Sub-Committee.
2. Peasants organization Sub-Commiettee.
3. Labour organization Sub-Committee.

" It also recommends that the Propaganda Sub-Committee conduct the organ of the Party in both English as well as in Hindustani and also publish literature for the propagation of the Socialism in India.

Condemnation of all Reactionary measures.

The Party also condemned the Bihar Tenancy Bill and the repression in various provinces at the time of holding the conference.

This is what the infant C. S. P. stood for. These were the ideals and objectives it had before itself. It did not hanker after any delusions or illusions. Its programme was clear cut and well defined. There was no wavering in its outlook. With this it went ahead with its work. It grew rapidly both in size and importance. It became the pioneer of peasants movements, labour organizations, and the spear-head the left wing in the Congress. Its role within that parent organization was of considerable importance. Though in several instances on numerous issues the party suffered crushing defeats, its object was more often than not more or less achieved. Though the Congress leadership remained unchanged and hostile to it—so far the majority is concerned—within a year of its birth, it succeeded in turning the thoughts of that premier national

organization in the direction of mass organization and mass action. The policy of the Congress came to have a distinct impress of socialism on it.

The role played by the C.S.P. within Congress as well as without it was magnificent indeed. Within it, it served as a rallying point for all the radical elements, without it it organized peasants movements, brought about a union between the various T.U. Congress and Federations, won the sympathy and support of the other radical organizations and put socialism till then a subject for academic discussion on the political map of India. All these activities together with a rapid review of resolutions adopted by the party between 1936—41 are given in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE WITHIN CONGRESS AND A RAPID REVIEW OF RESOLUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES BETWEEN 1936—41

When we subject the history of our national development to a scrutinizing study we find that since the year of the birth of the Indian National Congress, i.e. 1885, the struggle of the Indian people has assumed different shapes and forms. From generation to generation the movement has changed its leadership and its policy and has developed from being the expression of an insignificant minority of educated people, so contemptuously referred to by the British people and bureaucracy, to being the organ of the toiling masses of the people which has repeatedly dared to raise its head in direct action struggles against the firmly entrenched British Raj. We see also alongside this development another tendency taking shape particularly since the last World War 1914, in the form of working class movement which expresses itself in strikes by the workers against exploitation whether by British or Indian capitalists, and by 1938 we see the phenomenal rise of a peasant movement which indeed is a most striking development of the recent times.

At the time of the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, it was felt that it was absolutely necessary for the good of the country that these two

revolutionary forces of pure nationalism and economic revolt against exploitation should be brought together and harnessed in common endeavour. The party arose out of the experiences of the Civil Disobedience movements of 1930 and 1932. It emerged at a time when national forces had suffered a great risk and appeared to be retreating in disorder under the fierce blows of intense repression by the British Government. The first task of the party was to stem that tide. How was that to be done? That was the question that confronted the leadership. On the one side the then existing leadership of the Congress, defeated in Civil Disobedience movements, thought more and more in term of constitutional agitation and opposition—a tendency which took shape in the form of Swaraj Party. Most of its leaders had very little time to interest themselves in the economic struggles of the peasantry or the workers and completely failed to realize the importance of organizing these classes and mobilizing them for active participation in the national struggle. On the other hand the communist leaders of small trade union movement showed an equal lack of Political realism. They were so absorbed to set up Soviets in this country that they forgot that the British Government had still to be overthrown. They directed the greater part of their attack on the Congress which they characterized as the party of the bourgeoisie, quite failing to realize that Nationalism for subject people is not a reactionary but a democratic and revolutionary force—a thing which they realized after two years when

the third International ordered them to align themselves with the Congress.

The Congress Socialist party conducted from the very start its fight on two fronts—calling for a new orientation both in the national and labour movements. The initiative in this task fell to those who were convinced Socialists and who at the same time had taken part in the national struggle. It is this close relationship with the national movement which is represented by the name the party bears contrary to the cavilling criticism of certain people who felt that there was something strange in this juxtaposition of Congress and Socialist. That combination has been in fact a real source of success to the party and of its strength.

A Socialist party in India has two fundamental tasks to accomplish, if it really is worthy of the name Socialist. The first is to help the building up of a powerful national front against the British Raj, for the purpose of wresting away political freedom from the latter. The second task is to spread the ideas of Socialism and prepare the ground for its introduction once the political freedom has been won. The accomplishment of these two fundamental tasks is also a part of what the Congress Socialist party has been working for.

Democratization of Congress, and the influencing of its policy from a Socialist stand point have also been the two of the objects of the C. S. P. How far it has worked and succeeded in the achievement of these shall be illustrated by the ensuing facts.

Role within Congress.

How the C. S. P. asked for the adoption of a Socialist programme at the time of Patna Congress has already been described. In this chapter the work of the Congress Socialist Party during the period 1936-41 only is intended to be narrated.

Opposition to the acceptance of the new Reforms, office acceptance, support of any kind to the British Government in War or otherwise; attracting of the attention of the Congress towards masses and fighting all anti-democratic measures of its leadership are the principal points upon which the C. S. P. concentrated its energy, and which deserve the attention of any and every keen student of Indian Politics.

Lucknow Congress 1936.

The C.S.P. had declared its unequivocal opposition to the proposed Government of India Act 1935 ever since its announcement-the publication of the J.P.C. report upon which it was based. The Congress leadership too had on more than one occasion condemned it. Entry to the legislatures however was not forbidden. The object of this was as had often been declared the fight from within the legislatures against the new constitution. The C.S.P. formed its views about the new constitution in the form of a resolution adopted at its 2nd Annual session held at Meerut, in January 1936 and urged the Congress to wreck it. The Congress held its 49th session at Lucknow on 12th, 13th and 14th April 1936. The session was an important one indeed. Resolution about the Government of India

Act 1935 came up. The Socialists secured their first victory in the open session. And the Congress too for the first time turned its whole hearted attention to the peasants and labourers. Various amendments were moved by the socialists. The resolution about the Government of India Act 1935 read.

"Whereas the Government of India Act 1935 which is based on the white paper and the J.P.C. report and which is in many respects worse than the proposals contained in them, in no way represents the will of the nation, is designed to facilitate and perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the people of India, and is imposed upon the country to the accompaniment of wide spread repression and suppression of the civil liberties, the Congress reiterates its rejection of the new constitution in its entirety.

"The Congress as representing the will of the Indian people for National freedom and a democratic state declares that no constitution imposed by outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of India and does not recognize her peoples right to shape and control fully their political and economic future can be accepted.

The question of acceptance or non-acceptance of office by Congress members elected to the legislatures under the constitution having been agitated in the country, the Congress in view of the uncertainties of the situation as it may develop consider it inadvisable to commit itself to any decision at this stage on the question and

leaves it to be decided by the A. I. C. C. at the proper time after consulting the provincial Congress Committees."

Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar speaking on behalf of B. Sampurnanand asked the Congress to define its policy and programme, in an amendment. He also moved in an amendment that the purpose of all legislative activity should be to create deadlocks. Both of these amendments were however defeated by overwhelming majority.

Resolution moved by Babu Parshotam Dass Tandan proposing the appointment of a committee consisting of B. Rajinder Prashad, Mr. Jai Ram Dass Daulat Ram, and Mr. Jai Prakash Narain to examine the question of bringing about closer contacts between the Congress and the masses, had an easy passage. The Socialists' amendment moved by B. Sampurnanand suggesting a method for direct representation of peasants and workers was however defeated.

Mrs. Kamla Devi Chattopadhyai's amendment opposing the abolition of the system of proportional representation regarding elections to the A. I. C. C. was the only amendment of the session carried successfully. This was the first victory of the C. S. P. The proportional representation itself was essential for ensuring the representation of any minority in the A. I. C. C.

A. I. C. C. Meeting At Delhi.

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A. I. C. C. Meeting At Delhi.

It was not till the 18th of March 1937 that the Indian National Congress adopted the resolution regarding the

acceptance of ministerial offices, at the meeting of the A. I. C. C. at Delhi. The resolution was nothing short of a bombshell for the Socialist and other radical groups within the Congress and encountered naturally enough vehement opposition from these groups. the resolution. read :—

" A. I. C. C. records its high appreciation of the magnificent response of the country to the call of the Congress during the recent elections and the approval by the electorate of the Congress policy and programme. The Congress entered these elections with its objective of Independence and its total rejection of the new constitution. The declared Congress policy was to combat the new Act and end it. The electorate has in overwhelming measures set its seal on this policy and programme and the new Act therefore stands condemned and utterly rejected by the people through the self same democratic process which had been evoked by the British Government, and the people have further declared that they desire Independence to frame their own constitution based on national demand through the medium of the Constituent Assembly elected by adult franchise. This committee therefore demands on behalf of the people of India that the new constitution be withdrawn.

"In the event of the British Government still persisting with the new constitution in defiance of the declared will of the people, the A. I. C. C. desires to impress upon all Congress members of the legislatures that their work inside and outside the legislatures must be based on the

fundamental Congress policy of combating the new constitution and seeking to end it, a policy on the basis of which they sought the suffrage of the electorate and won the overwhelming victory in the elections. That policy must inevitably lead to deadlock with the British Government and bring out still further the inherent antagonism between British Imperialism and Indian Nationalism and expose the autocratic and undemocratic nature of the constitution.

"The A. I. C. C. endorses and confirms the resolution of the Working Committee passed at Wardha on February 27 and 28, 1937 on the extra parliamentary activities of the Congress members of the legislatures, mass contact, and the Congress policy in the legislatures and asks the Congressmen in the legislatures outside to work in accordance with the directions contained in them.

"And on the pending question of office acceptance and in pursuance of the policy summed up in the foregoing paragraphs, the A. I. C. C. authorises, and permits the acceptance of offices in provinces where Congress commands a majority in the legislature provided that the ministership shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress party in the legislature is satisfied and is able to state publically that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of ministers in regard to the constitutional activities."

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain very rightly moved an amendment urging the deletion of the last paragraph and the substitution of the following "The A. I. C. C. is of opinion

that the acceptance of the ministerial office by the Congress is inconsistent with the policy adumbrated above and would weaken the struggle for national Independence. The A. I. C. C. deprecates the idea that the Congress ministers can within the framework of the Government of India Act secure any appreciable amelioration in the condition of the exploited and oppressed section of the people or any substantial political or economic concession for them. On the other hand the acceptance of responsibility without the transfer of any real power will make the Congress ministries a party to the repression and exploitation which is implicit in the Imperialist regime and will thus discredit the Congress in the eyes of the people. The A. I. C. C. therefore decides against the acceptance of ministerial office by the Congress ”.

The last paragraph of the resolution indeed is in striking contrast to the first two ones. It is really inconsistent with the policy and attitude indicated in the former two. Nevertheless the right wing insisted upon the maintenance of this inconsistency and Mr. Narain's motion was lost by 135 to 178 votes. The actual resolution was however carried by 127—70 votes.

At Haripura session of the Indian National Congress the Congress Socialists objected strongly to the adoption of the Resolution about the states, which forbade the conduct of any type of activity parliamentary or otherwise, in the name of the Congress in the states. Despite the resolution the C. S. P. leadership declared more than once that it stood by the people of the Indian States in their struggle for the betterment of their conditions.

The C. S. P. served during these years as has already been stated above as the spear head of the left wing in the Congress. It was the rallying point for all radical elements within that premier national organization. It represented the will of the exploited poor classes.

In the presidential election tussel between Subhash C. Bose, India's Netaji today and Pattabhi Sita Ramya, the C. S. P threw up its weight on the side of the brave son of India who was to immortalize himself, only six years afterwards, as the Netaji of the Indian National Army. Pattabhi Sita Ramya's defeat was also a great deal due to the opposition of the Congress Socialist Party.

The Party's role and attitude at the time of the Tripuri session however has drawn criticism both from the party members and the people outside it. The party remained neutral when the time came for voting on Pt. Govindh Vallabh Pant's resolution calling upon Mr. Subhas Bose the President of the Congress to appoint a Working Committee which had the fullest confidence of Mahatma Gandhi. Due to this attitude of neutrality adopted by the party the Gandhists had an easy victory and resolution was carried with overwhelming majority. This act was termed as a stab in the back by the supporters of the Congress President. Much can be said on both-sides. It would however be unfair to give the accused no chance for clearing his position. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's statement in this connection clears up the position. He said:—

"Our Party voted for Subhash C. Bose but from the very beginning we had made it clear that our vote did not mean a settling of the issues between the Rightists and the Leftists. We voted for Mr. S. C. Bose because we preferred him to the other candidate namely Mr. Pattabhi Sita Ramya. We then never expected that it would lead to a schism in the Congress. Our party does not and will not participate in the quarrel. It would not help us maintain unity. This could have been averted and a settlement arrived upon. We tried our best to prevent it. We went to Subhas Babu and asked him to issue a statement. He did so but it was not satisfactory. We came to the Rightists but were disappointed. We came to the conclusion that unless the Working Committee was appointed in accordance with the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi it would not be possible to maintain unity. There are things said in the resolution with which we cannot agree. If only both sides had co-operated with us, it would have been possible to bring about a settlement. We do not want to participate in this quarrel hence we have decided to remain neutral." "Unless the Working Committee.....unity". This part of the statement has been subjected to much criticism. And there is weight in it also. If the unity could not have been endangered by the defeat of the Mahatma in the Presidential election it certainly could not have been so by voting against 'Pt' ~~Panat's~~ resolution. The resolution in fact is representative of nothing but a tendency to stick to a dictator.

Acharya Narendar Dev's explanation that the Left was weak and could not have defeated the resolution and

hence the attitude of neutrality, is a bit more reasonable. Nevertheless it can be safely asserted that the Congress Socialist Party did not commit a very grave blunder in assuming the role of neutrality on the above.

At Tripuri session, Mrs. Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya moved a resolution calling upon the Congress to take direct interest in the states affairs and actively be in charge of the conduct of various movements in the states. The resolution was defeated.

The resolution about the National Demand adopted at the Tripuri session of the Congress 1939, was a resolution sponsored by the Congress Socialist Party. It was for the first time in its history that the party moved successfully such an important resolution. It was moved by Mr. Jai Prakash Narain and read as follows. "The Congress has for more than half a century striven for the advancement of the people of India and has represented the urge of the Indian people towards freedom and self expression. During the past twenty years it has engaged itself on behalf of the masses of the country in struggle against British Imperialism and through the suffering and disciplined sacrifice of the people it has carried the Nation a long way towards Independence which is its objective. With the growing strength of the people it has adapted itself to a changing and developing situation and while pursuing various programmes has ever worked for the Independence of India and the establishment of a democratic state in the country. Rejecting the Government of India Act with full determination to

end it, it decided to take advantage of the Provincial Autonomy the act provided, restricted and circumscribed as it was in order to strengthen the national movement and to give such relief to the masses as was possible under the circumstances. To the Federal part of the act the Congress declared its uncompromising opposition and its determination to resist its imposition.

The Congress declares afresh its resolve to achieve Independence for the nation and to have a constitution framed for a free India through a Constituent Assembly on the basis of adult franchise and without any interference by a foreign authority. No other constitution or attempted solution of the problem can be accepted by the Indian people.

The Congress is of opinion that in view of the situation in India, the organized strength of the National movement, the remarkable growth of consciousness among the masses, the new awakening among the people of the states as well as the rapid development of the world situation, the principle of self determination must now be applied to the fullest extent to India so that the people of India may establish an independent democratic state by means of a Constituent Assembly. Not only the inherent right and dignity of the people demand this full freedom but also the economic and other problems which press insistently on the masses cannot find solution nor can India get rid of poverty and keep face with modern progress unless the people have full opportunities of self government and growth which Independence alone can give. Provincial autonomy affords no such scope

for development and its capability for good is being rapidly exhausted. The proposed Federation strangles India still further and will not be accepted. The Congress is therefore firmly of opinion that the whole Government of India Act must give place to a constitution of free India made by the people themselves.

An independent and democratic India will face the solution of her great problems rapidly and effectively and will line herself with the progressive people of the world and thus aid the cause of democracy and freedom.

With a view to a speedy realization of the Congress objective and in order to face effectively the national and international crises that loom ahead and prepare the country for a nation-wide struggle this Congress calls upon all parts of the Congress organization, the Congress provincial governments and the peasants generally to work to this end by promoting unity and seeking to eliminate disruptive forces and conditions which lead to communal conflicts and national disunity, by co-ordinating the activities of the provincial Governments with the work outside the legislatures and by strengthening the organization so as to make it a still more effective organ of the people's will".

After the Tripuri session too the Congress Socialist Party kept straight on its course and remained firm on its stand. It remained fundamentally opposed to India's participation in any imperialist war and urged the Indian National Congress also to adopt a similar attitude. When the mother organization however showed the slightest

signs of wavering and vacillation it took it to task in its resolutions. A rapid review of important resolutions together with the statements issued by the working committee or the National executive between 1936-41 is given below.

Meerut Session. 2nd Session of the A. I. C. S. P.

The 2nd session of the All India Congress Socialist Party was held at Meerut, on the public grounds which the municipality only the previous month had refused to lend to the Congress for Jubilee celebrations, on January 19 and 20, 1936. Shrimati Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya was elected president of the conference. Shrimati Satyawati Devi of Delhi was the chairwoman of the reception committee and delivered the welcome address. The following resolutions were adopted.

(1) Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's resolution urging the election of Pandit Nehru as President for the ensuing session, seconded by Yusuf Mehar Ali and carried unanimously.

(2) Mr. Mohan Lal Gautam's resolution characterizing as reasonable the demands of Mr. S. C. Chatterjee the political prisoner on hunger strike for (i) The concentration of political prisoners in Central Jail (ii) equal treatment and the abolition of the system of classifications (iii) Abolition of cellular confinement (iv) free supply of daily newspapers, magazines and books (v) return of Andaman prisoners to their respective provinces (vi) proper medical treatment (vii) and the privilege of supplementing diet and clothing at prisoners expense.

(3) Swami Sampurnanand's resolution on constitutional reforms, rejecting the reforms act and also urging the

Congress to wreck the new constitution; also advising those who entered councils to press for certain demands of the masses such as the abolition of the land revenue system and its replacement by a graduated income tax on agricultural income above Rs. 500 per annum, abolition of landlordism and other forms of intermediaries between the state and the cultivator, a minimum wage of not less than Rs. 30 for 40 hours week, freedom of speech and press, cancellation of all arrears of debt and revenue and provision of cheap credit.

(4) Mr. R. A. Khedgar Gen. Sec A. I. T. U. C.'s resolution opposing the granting of the right of electing representatives of the trade unions.

At the Meerut session numerous other resolutions rejecting the new constitution, strongly opposing the office acceptance, suggesting taking up a line of action which would compel the government to resort to ordinance rule, urging the amendment of the Congress constitution so as to include adequate representation of the exploited classes and appealing to the unemployed middle class men to join hands with the unemployed workers and peasants to establish social ownership over means of production were adopted. Formation of alliance between Congress and reactionary and vested interests i.e. alliance with liberals out of greed for high offices was also condemned.

Mr. Mohan Lal Gautam's resolution calling upon the Socialist Parties to organize peasants in their territories and send the delegates to the forthcoming Lucknow Kissan conference was unanimously adopted. The last resolution passed

was that of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia urging the party to sponsor a resolution at the next congress session for the democratization of Congress by including points already published, including the removal of clause relating to manual labour and habitual wearing of khaddar.

Faizpur Session 23rd and 24th December 1936.

At the Third Annual Session of the All India Congress Socialist Party held at Faizpur on 23rd and 24th December 1946 under the Presidentship of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain the following resolutions of note were passed.

(1) Mrs. Satyavati Devi's resolution urging the boycott of the King's coronation.

(2) Mrs. Rajani Mukerjee's resolution opposing the Participation by India in any war.

(3) Mohan Lal Kulkarni's resolution urging the release of all political prisoners and

(4) Dr. Ram Manohar Lohias resolution alling upon the party to utilize the election platform for the spread of its doctrines and ideals etc.

Lahore Session 12th and 13th April 1938.

For the first 'time in the history of the Punjab the Congress flag and the red flag were hoisted side by side by Mr. Jai Prakash Narain on the occasion of the fourth Annual Session of the A. I. C. S. S. P. held at Lahore in the spacious Pandals in the Municipal gardens on 12th April 1938, under the Presidentship of Mr. M. R. Massani. Explaining the reason for hoisting the two flags together Mr. Jai Prakash Narain said, "There is no difference between

the two flags. Their main object is to strengthen the fight for freedom. There used to be differences over the two flags but gradually we understood that the fight for freedom should be carried on under one flag and that is the Congress flag. It is wrong to say that the Socialists do not respect the Congress flag. In fact we are fighting the battle for Independence under Congress flag and under the red flag we are spreading Socialism." Munshi Ahmad Din, the General Secretary of the Provincial Congress Socialist Party read out the welcome address as the chairman of the reception committee and stated the work done by the Provincial Socialist Party. Over 75000 Kisans had been enrolled as the members of the Peasants committee and Trade unions had been formed in ten Districts. The work was splendid indeed, taking into consideration the short period during which it was accomplished only six months.

Mr. M. R. Massani delivered a notable presidential address. He reviewed the history of the Congress Socialist Party from 1934—39 and declared that the abolition of private property and evolution of a classless society was the essence of revolutionary socialism. Continuing he said "I would say that the basic conceptions underlying our creed are those of equality and liberty. It is necessary to emphasize this because it is these tests which differentiate genuine socialism from the bastard socialism—the national social (Nazi) or other spurious brands. And this genuine socialism is what the C. S. P. stands for."

The resolutions adopted at the Lahore session of the party were few and unimportant, excepting the one

relating to the amendment of the constitution and appointment of the members of National Executive. There were only two resolutions of note. The one moved by Mr. Achuyat Patwardhan expressing party's vehement opposition to the Federation and assuring the party of the assistance of the Indians in East Africa. There was also another resolution reviewing the work of Congress ministers and congratulating Trade union Congress and National Trade Union Federation at their emergence into one organization namely the All India Trade Union Congress. The second important resolution was that of Professor Ram Manohar Lohia about the international situation and asking the Congress to profit from it and plan its programme and policy accordingly.

In the amended constitution the number of the members of the executive committee was increased from 12 to 17. The system of retaining five supplementary members was given up.

National Executive of the Party was formed as follows:
General Secretary. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, Joint Secretaries Messrs. M. R. Massani, Dinkar Mehta, E.M. Namboodiripad and Yusuf Meherali.

Members. Munshi Ahmad Din, Mrs. Kamla Dev Chattopadhyaya, Acharya Narendra Dev, Achuyat Patwardhan, Professor Ram Manohar Lohia, Mr. Siva Nath Bennerjee. Gunada Mazumdar, Sh. Satyavati, Asok Mehta, Kamla Shanka Pad, Seth Damodar Swarup and Sayyad Zaheer.

Executive Committee's Statement.

The war broke out in September 1939. In less than a week India also found itself an active though unwilling and

forcibly dragged participant in it. Both the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party had declared their unequivocal opposition to it. The right-wing Dominated Working Committee however did not like coming to grips with the foreign government immediately. Though the Congress Socialist Party leaders declared the party's resolve to have nothing to do with the British Government at the very outbreak of the hostilities in Europe, yet the Working Committee continued following its delaying tactics in arriving upon any decision as it had done at the time of the last elections. It was after many a hesitation that it finally agreed to withdraw its ministers from the provincial cabinets. It however continued under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi trying to come to some agreement. This policy of the Working Committee drew severe criticism from all non-compromisers and several no compromise conferences were held in the country under the inspiration from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The C. S. P. as a party within Congress tried its utmost to make the mother body lay down a clear cut policy and programme. Its efforts however did not meet with success. The Congress Working Committee in its Delhi Session held in July 1940 passed a resolution about the political situation which was in striking contravention of its hitherto declared intentions and policy. The Executive Committee of the A. I. C. S. P. thereupon met in Bombay and issued a statement representing party's attitude towards the resolution. Both the resolution and statement are reproduced here. These shall give the reader a clear insight into the trend of thought of the Working Committee and that of the Congress Socialist Party.

Working Committee's Resolution on Political Situation.

"The Working Committee of the I. N. C. have noted the serious happenings which have called forth fresh appeals to bring about a solution of the dead lock in the Indian political situation ; and in view of the desirability of clarifying the Congress position they have earnestly examined the whole position again in the light of the latest developments in World Affairs.

The Working Committee are more than ever convinced that the acknowledgment by Great Britain of the complete Independence for India is the only solution of the problems facing both India and Britain and are therefore of opinion that such an equivocal declaration should be made immediately, and that as an immediate step in giving effect to it, a provisional National government should be constituted at the centre, which though formed as a transitory measure should be such as to command the confidence of all the elected elements in the Central Legislature and secure the closest co-operation of the responsible governments in the provinces.

The Working Committee are of opinion that unless such a declaration is made and the aforesaid government formed at the centre without delay all efforts at organizing the material and moral resources of the country for defence cannot in any sense be voluntary or as from a free country and will therefore be ineffective. The Working committee declare that if these measures are adopted it will enable the Congress to throw in its full weight in the

efforts for the effective organization of the defence of the country. The resolution was later on ratified by the A. I. C. C. held under the presidentship of Maulana Azad on 27th July 1940.

Without expressing any comments, the statement of the executive committee of the A. I. C. S. P. is reproduced below. It ran :—

"The Executive Committee has noted with alarm the decision of the Congress Working Committee at its last meeting at Delhi to offer support to the British Government in the prosecution of war on certain grounds. It appeals to the Congressmen to raise their voices against the decision and try to secure its reversal.

"For five years now the Congress has at its each successive session declared its uncompromising opposition to war and its decision to resist actively any attempt to involve India in an Imperialist War. When the present war broke out in September 1939 and the British Government declared India to be belligerent, the A. I. C. C. at its meeting at Wardha recorded its protest against India being dragged into war against its will. Still the Congress did not take any precipitate step at the time and invited the British government to declare its war aims. In the meantime Congress stood firmly by its policy of non co-operation with the war effort.

"At the Wardha meeting of the A. I. C. C. in October 1939 the C. S. P. moved an amendment to the resolution defining its attitude towards the war, in which it was

definitely indicated that only a free India could finally determine India's attitude towards war.

"The British government true to its imperialist character declined to respond to this invitation and the Working Committee felt compelled to call for the resignation of all Congress ministries in the provinces as the first step in the non co-operation with war. The resignation of popular ministries created a wave of vast popular enthusiasm and it was thought by the mass of Congressmen that Ramgarh would set the stage for the coming struggle. The session reaffirmed India's opposition to participation in the Imperialist War and gave the call to Congressmen and Congress organizations to prepare for a mass movement. The assumption of leadership by Mahatma Gandhi at Ramgarh was a clear indication that the Congress offer would not involve India into war.

"Now however the basic policy of Congress—of resistance to Imperialist War is sought to be abandoned by a majority of the Working Committee.

"The C. S. P. has since its formation in 1934 made war resistance one of its main planks. When the war broke out it advocated immediate and unconditional resistance to it by the Congress and exposed its imperialistic character. It hoped that the resignation of Congress ministries which it welcomed would be followed by active resistance to war.

"Government repression has taken a heavy toll of Congressmen throughout the country and day by day the repression is getting intenser. Among others the General

Secretary of the party Comrade Jai Prakash Narain and several of its members are behind the bars. At the Ramgarh session, a statement was made on behalf of the party lending support to the Working Committee in the belief and hope that the call for preparations for the civil disobedience would soon turn into direct action itself. The Working Committee's present stand however shatters any hope of resistance, to the war and opens up the prospect of actual support for the war which the Congress stands pledged to oppose.

"Mahatma Ghandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan have dissociated themselves from this decision. In so far as such dissociation implies their opposition to any participation, in this war, we are in agreement with them.

"Despite any declaration that Britain would make regarding India, Britain would remain an imperialist power and war an Imperialist War. The latest illustration to prove that the Britain is not fighting for democracy or the freedom of nations against aggression is the closing of the Burma Road to China thus assisting on aggressor against a fellow member of the League of Nations which is being attacked. In such a context the so-called National Government would far from helping the masses have for its main function more intense exploitation of the country, its resources, and its manpower, and giving of a democratic trimming to the British apparatus of repression. In short a National Government under the Union Jack is is an anti National Government. As Gandhiji has pointed out in the Harjan of 7th July 1940. "The Congress has to

make its choice. The temptation is irresistible. Congressmen can once again become Cabinet Ministers. They may also become Ministers or the Members of the Government at the Centre. They will have an insight into the war machine. They will watch from inside (again to the extent allowed) the Englishman at work when engaged in a life and death struggle. They will have to raise crores of rupees and dispose of them in the war effort. If I have my way I would have the Congress resist the irresistible temptation and not grudge those who believe in the accepted method of filling all those posts".

"We cannot contemplate without grave concern the prospect of Congressmen taking their places in such a Government. The various attempts of the Congress in seeking clarification and finally a declaration on the part of the British Government during the last few months have resulted in our not being able to devote all our energies to the task of preparing the country for the struggle for Independence. We feel that it is time we cried halt to the policy of seeking satisfaction of our demands from the British Government and devoting all our energy to preparing the country to wrest power from Britain.

"The events are moving so fast on the international stage that India may be called upon to face a grave crisis at any moment. If India is to take full advantage of such a crisis it can only be done if the realization of the existence of such a situation is brought home to the Indian people and the means for facing the situation are created without delay.

"With this end in view we suggest that immediate steps should be taken to create an effective organization of National Guards throughout the country, to reorganize the Congress Committees in such a way that they become effective in any emergency, to prepare the people for the not-too distant contingency when they will be called upon to summon a Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution of a free India."

Resolution about Montgomery Jail

The National Executive of the Congress Socialist Party in its meeting held in Bombay on 18th September 1940 also adopted a resolution moved by Yusuf Meharali the General Secretary about the hunger strikers in Montgomery Jail. The resolution considered the strike justified and urged upon Sir Sikander Hayat Khan the Prime Minister of the Punjab to intercede in the matter immediately, meet the reasonable demands of the hunger-strikers, and bring about a just and swift solution of the impasse. The prisoners had gone on hunger strike as a protest against among other things—unsatisfactory prison conditions.

In the workers and peasant field the Congress Socialist party devoted itself to the task of setting up and organizing the peasants and trade unions. Its programme was also essentially a peasants and labourers programme. They were the people to receive the greatest benefit from it and the party started benefitting them from the very start.

All India Kissan movement owes its origin to the Congress Socialist party. Immediately after its coming into

existence it started setting up Kissan Sabhas throughout the country. At the Meerut session a resolution was passed calling upon all the branches of the party to send their delegates to the forthcoming All India Kissan Conference. The conference proved a great success and the Kissan sabhas also succeeded to a great extent in improving the conditions of the peasants considerably. The second front the C.S.P. worked zealously on was the labour front. Upto the formation of the party the communists held unchallenged sway over this front. They had created a split in the trade union organization. There were two trade unions functioning at the time. The Red trade union and N.T.U.F. the Congress socialist party succeeded in bringing about a union between the two and their emergence into the All India Trade Union Congress. This was indeed a magnificent achievement. After this the party set itself to the task of expanding the trade unions. The influence of the communist was ousted to a great extent. The Congress socialist delegates began to increase in number. The present position on this front today is that excepting the Punjab and certain other areas, the Congress Socialist Party dominates the trade union movement throughout the country.

The communists sought their entry into the party in 1935. They had upto that time openly opposed it. They had also tried to create disturbance at the party's session in Bombay and carried on nefarious propaganda against it. The Congress Socialists had been dubbed as Social Fascists by them. Their this change of policy was the product of that of the Third International 1935. They were

ordered to join the Congress and seek entry into the C.S.P. The communist leaders including Palme Dutt expressed their regret at having dubbed the party as a social fascist and admitted that it was truly a revolutionary party. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain allowed their entry into the organization at the time of Meerut session in the hope that it would bring about union of the two. This hope was however belied. The communists were acting on the instructions of their chiefs in Moscow. They did not remain faithful to the party and instead formed a conspiracy to establish their control on the party. This illustrated the impossibility of carrying on any work with them and the party had to reluctantly decide not to allow their entry into it. The breaking of hostilities in Europe in 1939 and the Russo German Non-aggression pact caused still another somersault in the communists' policy and the consequent ban on their activities. This brought the communist episode to an end so far the party was concerned.

The party also inspired the formation of Students Unions. Messrs Yusaf Meharli, Narendar Dev and Sampurna Nand did splendid work in this connection. The A. I. S. C. was the product of the conference which were presided over by them.

The Party also established International contacts. Messrs Massani and Krishna Menon acted as its London Secretaries. It also issued a foreign news letter regularly. Its delegates were invited by the British Socialist League to establish contacts with the Labour movement and the common masses. Mr. Massani did good work in this connection.

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CHAPTER V

1942

1942 is the most important and glorious year in the twentieth century history of India. It was an equally eventful year in the world history too. On the International field the war situation took quite an unexpected turn, and on the Indian thick dark clouds of National discontent burst into a down, pour of country-wide uprising against the foreign Government. The Indian National Congress took at last a bold step by passing the Quit India resolution and gave the much-wanted and long awaited lead to the too-anxious-for-action Indian Nationalists. The Congress Socialist Party played the most glorious role of all in the struggle that ensued and made itself admired and the beloved of the whole Nation. Outside India Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the bravest son the country has produced during modern times, carried on his own struggle for the Independence of India with the help of the I.N.A. Inside India the Congress socialist leaders organized their own campaign on their own lines. Many old theories and tactics were discarded and many new ones adopted. The struggle was a great advancement upon all the former ones in respect of intensity, technique and importance. The country learnt many new lessons and made a great advance towards its goal of Independence.

The year began with the news of the Allied retreats pouring in from all sides. Japan the latest entrant in the world war inflicted crushing defeats on the British, Chinese, American and Australian forces in the whole area stretching from China to the approaches of Australia. It appeared that the British and American Empires were on their last legs. Japan proved by its glorious victories that it had got the men, money and armaments to successfully challenge the might of the Allied nations. The British and American strong holds fell one by one in quick succession. Within less than three months of its entry in the war Japan captured almost the whole of Philipines, Malaya, Singapore, Dutch East Indies, French Indo-China, and most of the Pacific islands. Burma also went out of the British control shortly afterwards. In Africa too the condition of the Allies was much the same. General Rommels forces threatened the whole of Egypt. Tobrak had fallen and the German forces had kept on an unhalted advance in the face of 11 per cent. superior in numbers, 40 per cent. stronger in tanks 60 per cent in Artillery and 60 per cent. in Air British forces. Russia too was suffering heavy losses. The year in fact appeared to be an ominous year and in the East specially, in the words of Professor Nathaniel Peffes of the Columbia University, "the day of Western Empire in the far East if not in the whole East appeared to be done."

With the entry of Japan India became the crux of the world war problem. With the loss of Malaya and with Japanese forces rapidly advancing in Burma its strategic

position became one of paramount importance for the defence of China, Russia as well as the whole of British Empire in the East. The War in the already lost areas had taught the Allies a bitter lesson—the inhabitants were hostile to them and friendly to the enemy. It was necessary to avoid this thing happening in India. This again could not be done without conceding to the people of India the right of Independence.

Marshal Chiang Kai Shek together with the Madame paid a visit to India in early February. The object of the visit is an open secret now. Persuading the Viceroy to impress upon the Government at home, the necessity of making India free was also a part of it. It was the first time for such a distinguished guest to visit India. But his intervention was not liked, it was rather resented. And though the Government of India was lavish in giving banquets and parties to their honoured guests and giving them country wide publicity, it remains a fact that on his arrival with his wife on the New Delhi Railway Station the Commander-in-Chief of the Chinese forces, Marshal Chiang was received, not by His Excellency the Viceroy personally, but by his Aide Camp !

Speaking in India in February 1942 he said: "At this most critical moment in the history of civilization our two peoples should exert themselves to the utmost in the cause of freedom for all mankind, for only in a free world could the Chinese and Indian people obtain their freedom. Further more should freedom be denied to either China or India there should be no real peace in the

World." About the British Government he said "Without waiting for any demands on the part of the people of India, she will as speedily as possible, give them real Political power so that they may be in a position further to develop their spiritual and material strength and thus realize that their participation in the war is not merely an aid to the anti-aggression nations for securing victory, but also a turning point in their struggle for India's freedom."

The Marshal's mission proved a failure and he went back with the object with which he had come, unfulfilled. The Coalition Government in England, though fully alive to the increasing peril, was still unprepared to grant Independence to India. Speaking so far back as in early March 1942 Duke of Devonshire, the under Secretary of State for India, said in the House of Parliament. "It is not the question of handing over the power. It is the question of which party or parties to hand over Government to? The major Political parties have got conflicting demands" The speeches of the Secretary of State Mr. L. S. Amery also ran in the same vein. Nevertheless, they were compelled despite their reluctance to part with power, to send down Sir Stafford Cripps to India, to consult the Leaders of Indian opinion and make them agree to the War Cabinet proposals.

Without touching in detail upon the negotiations that ensued the War cabinets proposals are laid hereunder:

Cripps Proposals.

His Majesty's Government having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfilment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms, the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other dominions by a common allegiance to the crown but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.

H. M's government therefore make following Declaration.

(a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new constitution for India.

(b) Provision shall be made as set out below for the participation of the Indian States in the constitution making body.

(c) H. M.'S Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the constitution so framed subject only to.

1. The Right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.

With such non—acceding provinces should they so desire, H.M'S government will be prepared to agree upon a new constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian union, and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

2. The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between H. M.'S government and the constitution making body. This treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of complete transfer of responsibilities from the British to Indian hands. It will make provision in accordance with the undertakings given by H. M's Government for the protection of racial and religious minorities but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relationship to other member states of the British commonwealth.

Whether or not an Indian state elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The constitution making body shall be composed as follows, unless the Leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities.

Immediately upon the result being known of the Provincial elections, which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the lower houses of the Provincial Legislatures shall as a single Electoral college proceed to the election of the constitution making body by the system of proportional representation. This

new body shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of Electoral college.

Indian states shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

(e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed, H. M'S Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for, and retain the control and direction of, the Defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral, and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India. H.M'S Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the councils of their country, of the commonwealth, and of the united nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India." India was also entitled to send a delegate on the war cabinet of the Pacific Council and be represented on the Peace Conference as well.

Without going into details much, it will suffice to say that though the negotiations lasted for several weeks, they failed to bring forth any appreciable result. The proposals talked much about the uncertain and distant future and little about the immediate present. Even the proposals

related to the future could not be accepted by any true Nationalist. The accession of the right to secede was most deplorable. Never-the-less the congress in its earnest attempt to avoid coming to any conflict with the imperialist Government, tried its level best to strike some bargain. But the War Cabinet did not propose giving any thing. Sir Stafford Cripps had been sent only to justify the British stand and demonstrate to the World their willingness to part with power. Even the impending menace of Japanese aggression of India failed to make them part with any power. The Mission proved a failure. The proposals were rejected by almost all the parties. And Sir Stafford Cripps went back to his Motherland as he had come, empty-handed.

The utter and unexpected break-down of the negotiations disillusioned the people throughout the country. It demonstrated the reluctance of the British Government to part with power, and filled the masses with resentment against their rulers. Misrepresentation of the part played by Mahatma Gandhi, persisted in by Sir Stafford Cripps, augmented it all the more. Bitter criticism of the foreign-specially the British Press aggravated the situation still further. All this formed a back ground of the momentous decision arrived at by the Congress at its momentous meeting held in Bombay on 8th August 1942. Mahatma Gandhi voiced the resentment of the people by giving rise to the Demand of Quit India to the British Government. There was nothing new in the demand. It had been the popular National Demand ever since the year 1930. Only the language was a bit different

The country took up this demand and made it its own. A series of meetings of the working committee was held. Mahatma Gandhi sent in his draft of the resolution. The Draft was modified to a great extent with the help of Pandit Nehru and adopted unanimously by the working committee at its meeting held in the 2nd week of July. It was referred to the All India Congress Committee, the open session of which was to take place on August 7, 1942. The A.I.C.C. at its meeting held in Gowaliar Tank Maidan on August 8, 1942 passed the momentous Quit India resolution. The resolution was moved by Pandit Nehru and second by Shri Vallabh Bhai Patel. It read as follows.

"The A.I.C.C. has given the most careful consideration to reference made to it by the working committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942 and to subsequent events including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government and the comments and criticism made in India and abroad. The committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that the events subsequent to it have given further justification, and have made it clear that immediate ending of the British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and the success of the cause of United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of the world freedom.

"The committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration in the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts,

and conveys to the Russian and Chinese people its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom.

"These increasing perils make it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom, and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failures.

"It is not by adhering to such aims, policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power has become a burden and a curse. India the classic land of modern imperialism has become the crux of the question. For by the freedom of India will Britain and United Nations be judged and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

"The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing in all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of war but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in

bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism, and trait of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all United Nations.

"The peril of to-day therefore necessitates the Independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet the peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the minds of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

"The A. I. C. C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power in India. On the Declaration of India's Independence, provisional government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. It will thus be a composite government representative of all important sections of the peoples of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command together with its allied powers, and to promote the well being and progress of the workers in the field and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong.

"The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution according to the Congress

view should be a Federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the Federal units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

"The Freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo China, the Dutch East Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power. While the A. I. C. C. must primarily be concerned with the Independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the committee is of opinion that future peace, security and ordered progress of world demand a World Federation of free nations and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation of one nation by the other, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries.

National Armies, Navies, and Airforces would be no longer necessary and a World federal force would keep the World peace and prevent aggression.

"An Independent India would gladly join such a Federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of International problems.

"Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries and on the peace to come.

"The committee regretfully realises however that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Government of few countries are yet prepared to take this step towards World Federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticism of the foreign press also, make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's Independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia whose freedom is precious and must be preserved or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is

no answer to that growing peril, and no service to the people of United Nations. The earnest appeal of the committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response. And the criticisms made in foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India and world's needs and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength.

"The A. I. C. C. would yet again at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an Imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it, and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The committee resolves therefore to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to Freedom and Independence, the starting of a mass struggle, on non-violent lines, on the widest possible scale so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

"The committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot, with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji and carry out his instructions as

disciplined soldiers of Indian Freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the Independence and deliverance of India.

"Lastly whilst the A. I. C. C. has stated its own view of the future Governance under the Free India, the A. I. C. C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power when it comes will belong to the whole of India."

Though the committee sanctioned the starting of mass-movement, it was not to be started immediately. No definite lines upon which the movement was to be conducted were laid down. Detailed instructions were to be issued later on as had been made clear by Mahatma Gandhi in his press statements. The Government of India however were too apprehensive to wait any longer. Detailed instructions to the Provincial Governments had been issued by the Home Department weeks before. Within a few hours of the passing of the Quit India Resolution the gigantic repression machinery of the Government of India

came into operation. All the members of the Working Committee were arrested *en bloc* and taken to Agha Khan palace. This was followed by the arrest of hundreds of thousands workers throughout the country, making rigid of the press censorship and crushing of the Civil Liberties. The People of Bombay rose in the early hours of 9th August to see the police and Military patrolling the streets, and the news of the arrest of the entire Working Committee filling the air. This was too much. It was rather like a declaration of war on the free people of India. Mahatma Gandhi had asked every body to regard himself as a free man and act as such. It was an affront to them and an attack against their honour. It could not be taken lying down. And it was not.

The Bugle sounded the call to arms to the Nation. The undemocratic, unconstitutional and utterly out-of-date bureaucratic and repressive machinery of the Government of India took the offensive and tried to crush the spirit of the people. It however failed. 9th August was not to pass on as an ordinary day. Disturbances broke out in Bombay immediately after the news of the leaders arrest became public. Before the night fell the news had reached the farthest nook and corner of the country. The day was followed by disturbances breaking out at numerous places throughout the country.

Much has been said about the 1942 disturbances already. It is not my object to go into details about the causes of them. Whether the Congress was responsible for them or the Government, is no more an undecided or

controversial affair. It was no sudden development. It has become definitely established now. It was a culmination of all that had gone before. It was the result of the Government playing with the sentiments of the people.

The Congress Socialist Party had already attracted the attention of the Government of India. At the time of the commencement of the 1942 struggle most of its workers were behind the bars. Its general secretary Mr. Jai Prakash Narain had been arrested so far back as 1940. On the commencement of the struggle several of its other prominent workers were put behind the bars. Nevertheless it was the Congress Socialist Party which played the most glorious and important role in the struggle that followed Quit India resolution. It was the Congress Socialist Party that was responsible for all underground activities. It was the C.S.P. that organized the National movement.

1942 is and shall always remain one of the most important and unforgettable years in the history of India. It marked the commencement of a new era and a new policy in the struggle for Indian Independence. As I have already said above many old tactics were discarded and new ones adopted.

Before taking up in detail the National movement as conducted in the year 1942, it will be interesting to have a brief review of the past struggles after 1857. In 1921 when the non-cooperation movement was started non-violence was the pledged creed of the Congress. Political

awakening among the masses was still in its initial stages. Arrests were still uncommon and lathicharges and firings almost unknown. 1930 marked a great advancement upon the year 1921. To court arrest became an ordinary thing, lathicharges became frequent and even firings remained no longer uncommon. The masses were awakened to a great extent and the political consciousness had infiltrated into even the M.H.'s forces. It was in 1930 that several regiments at different places refused to fire on their unarmed brethren. 1930 also marked the advent of terroristic activities on a large scale. Shooting of the officers, bomb explosions and unearthing of conspiracies became daily front-page news. Non-violence still remained the accepted creed of the Congress. But the terroristic activities showed that the younger generation was getting weary of sticking to it.

By 1942 the conditions had changed altogether. Arrests, lathicharges, and firing had lost their terror and significance. The masses were awakened. Political consciousness had pervaded even the Government Servants. The war had taught several new lessons. And though the details of the resistance movement being conducted in Norway, Poland Czechoslovakia, France and other territories in occupied Europe were unknown to the majority of the people there were a few who knew them fully well. All is fair in love and war. That was the general trend of thought of all. The 1942 movement was conducted on this fundamental basis. Non violence ceased to be an unchallengeable creed. "Pay the oppressor in his own coin," became the dictum of the day.

"Every Indian should regard himself as a free man, was the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. "Should there be an attack on our Independence the use of force shall be justified," had been his own words said a few weeks before. In the words of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, the beloved General Secretary and leader of the Congress Socialist Party "It meant that with the passing of the Quit India resolution every Indian became a free man, and entitled to make use of violence to preserve his independence." This nullified the creed of non violence and made it a meaningless thing. The use of violence was thus sanctioned by Mahatma Gandhi himself—of course conditionally.

I do not want to enter here into any unnecessary controversy between violence and non-violence. Disorganized violence is ridiculous and stupid, but it is equally ridiculous to stick to non-violence in the face of an invading army. In the words of Subhas Bose "Success does not and can not come to any people by repeating over and over again the mistakes of the past. It comes only by making use of all the lessons learnt in the past". This fact was realized by almost all the Socialists and other Independent thinkers and they acted likewise.

Parallel Governments were set up at a number of places throughout the country. British influence and Government became extinct within a few hours at hundreds of places and remained so for several weeks and in certain cases several months. Anti British propaganda was conducted even among the members of His Majesty's

forces. The use of bombs, tommy machineguns, and some of the other most modern military devices was made. Azad Hind Radio stations were set up. Sabotage was conducted on vital points. At numerous places the expert C.I.D. men were outwitted by the novices who had suddenly run underground. Underground heroes came into prominence and proved to the world that India did not stand second to any nation in that respect too. That was 1942 in a nut-shell on the Nationalist's side.

It would take hundreds of pages to describe all the above mentioned activities of the fighters for Indian independence in detail. It will suffice to describe only a few briefly.

The Secret Radio Station was prepared by Professor Ram Manohar Lohia and operated by Miss Usha Mehta of Bombay. It was her voice that said "we are speaking from somewhere in India" and recited the Vande Matram accompanied by her other colleagues. It was after a very long time that she was arrested and even when the policemen and officers stood in front of her while she was reciting the Vande Matram before the mike, she continued along with her colleagues, undisturbed till she had finished it.!

Mrs Aruna Asaf Ali played her own role in Northern India. Mr. Achyut Patwardhan in Bombay, and Mr. Jai Prakash Narain in Bihar, Bengal and Nepal. Parallel Governments were set up at Satara in Bombay Presidency, Midnapore in Bengal, Balia and several other places. Of these the one at Satara deserves special mention.

Satara District in the Bombay Presidency has a unique position of its own. It is a typical Marhatta District, inhabited by typical Marhattas. Low but by no means unimpressive hills looping the valleys make this part of Maharashtra particularly well suited for mountain hideouts and defensive and offensive warfare. The traditions and activities of Shivaji Marhatta were revived by the inhabitants there-of. The parallel Government set up there was the longest and the most well organized of all. Prati Sarkar was the name of the Government. Hundreds of villages were governed by it. Orders were issued under its seal. Courts were held in open and cases decided according to the Prati Sarkar rules. Armed guards were maintained and the parallel Government continued functioning undisturbed for an incredible period. Even upto this day though most of the soldiers of the Prati Sarkar have been disarmed, it is not a rare sight to come across a band of well armed men. Nana Patil was the leader and soul of this government. His name was the most beloved and respected of all in the houses there.

There were five significant aspects of Sataras parallel Government.

Firstly, the British Police authority being weakest in the villages, the congress men took full advantage of the natural facilities, and made village units their base of operation.

Secondly they put an end to the nefarious activities of the robbers and dacoits who infested the country. They were called upon to join the underground elements instead

in their fight against the foreign rule. These activities were conducted by the inhabitants as organization of Rashtra Seva Dal type first. After three or four months however, another organization, distinct from the Rashtra Seva Dal was set up. This was called the Toofan Sena.

Thirdly Satara established that village republics could be re-established in India.

Fourthly, they established Panchayats or Nayaya-dan thandals. Since the chief instrument of their punitive measures was a form of chastisement known in those parts as Prati, the Government came to be known by the name of Prati Sarkar.

Lastly this Prati Sarkar changed the social, political and Economic life of the village by influencing the village life in the following manner.

(a) Conciliation of debts by inquiries on the spot. (b) Settlement of land disputes that had been dragging endlessly in the civil courts. (c) Curbing and ending of drink and vice. (d) Relief work in distressed area. (e) The punishment on the spot of wrong doers in cases of flagrant anti-social behaviour. (f) Ushering in Social reforms like the ending of the dowry system.

The Rebel Government of Satara was indeed thousand times preferable to the so-called-civilized British Government. Its achievements were magnificent. It served as the Sitara, the Guiding star, to the inhabitants of other provinces.

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain's flight from the Hazari Bagh Jail is an interesting and thrilling episode in the equally thrilling year 1942. With the help of five comrades how

he—along with them—succeeded in scaling the wall with the help of rope on the Dewali Day and entering the tumultuous sea of underground activities need not be explained. It is known to all. His activities however deserve a detailed mention.

By the time of his entry into the Indian field the disturbances were being crushed almost throughout the country. Open demonstrations had become very nigh impossible. Disorganized setting on fire of the Government offices continued but the movement on the whole was running underground. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain infused a new life and spirit into the struggle that appeared to be coming to too early an end. He issued a number of posters and letters to the underground colleagues and workers and thus saved the movement from coming to a premature end. In his letter to all fighters for freedom he dwelt in detail upon the causes of the failure of the parallel Governments at several places in India and also showed the way how they could be made a success. He organized the underground activities marvellously and started training the Guerrilla units in the Nepal state

Guerrillas can have an excellent chance in India. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain clearly saw that and set him self to the task of producing them. Hundreds of Biharis and Eastern Bengalis left their homes and migrated to the Nepal state which held out to them the promise of becoming the spear-head of the national revolt in the country. The state authorities' attitude was extremely lenient in

the beginning but the Government of India got very rightly alarmed and put pressure on the state authorities to put an end to them. This resulted in the consequent arrest of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain. He issued instructions to his colleagues to attack not the prison but the British guard when he was being handed over to them. They however decided to attack the prison and free him from there. The scheme was put into operation. Some state soldiers were killed and injured. A few of the underground (Three Arrows) too sustained injuries. Mr. Jai Prakash to put an end to them. This resulted in the consequent arrest of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain. He issued instructions to his colleagues to attack not the prison but the British guard when he was being handed over to them. They however decided to attack the prison and free him from there. The scheme was put into operation. Some state soldiers were killed and injured. A few of the underground (Three Arrows) too sustained injuries. Mr. Jai Prakash was however rescued and he entered the British India again.

With a prize of several thousands of rupees on his head, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain conducted his activities undaunted for several months. Police tried their level best to lay hands upon him, but each time he slipped just through their fingers. Like Mr. Achuyat Patwardhan he also became a handful of Quick-silver for the Indian Police. He was seen in Calcutta, as said Sir Nazim-ud-din in a public statement, but though the police combed the whole of city they failed to find him. The

fact was that he had got out of the city by air. Pilot was arrested later on and tried. But Mr. Jai Prakash Narain continued to scare the Indian police. So great was the Government's fear of him that it was believed that every train bound for Bengal and Assam war zone would be blown up. He was actually the brain behind 1942. He also tried to contact the I.N.A. but failed. The Punjab police got a rare prize when they arrested him in Autumn 1943. He was arrested between Lahore and Amritsir as a result of betrayal. Police entered his compartment at Amritsir, got down at Moghalpura and took him straight to the Lahore fort—the most notorious concentration camp in the British India.

After the arrest of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, one by one almost all of his colleagues fell into the police trap some how or other and the struggle became dull once more.

The Congress Socialist Party, as many of its members as were out, kept on the struggle still. Government tried to crush them by all means possible. It also tried to crush and eliminate the Indian National Congress even. It was declared an unlawful organization throughout the country. To be a member of the C.S.P. was to court immediate arrest. The C.S.P. was like a red tag to the bull for the Government.

And it had not only to face the onslaught of the Government but also that of the treacherous communists whose activities were just like a stab in the back. The commencement of the Russo-German war made them the most zealous supporters of the British Government,

whose denouncers they had been hitherto. Their role in the 1942 was to become later on the cause of alienating them from the nationalistic elements in the country.

The greatest contribution of the Congress Socialist Party in the 1942 struggle to the country was the giving to it a new policy and programme. It demonstrated to the masses the futility of sticking to time-dishonoured policies and necessity of keeping up with the time-spirit.

1942 was actually a year of mass struggle. State of Martial Law prevailed in several parts of the country. Thousands of innocent men and women were arrested and tortured barbarously. Hundreds of children and women were shot down mercilessly. Villages were looted—not by the outlaws—but by the guardians of Law and Order. Ladies were raped. Respectable citizens were disgraced. Boys were shot at for wearing Gandhi caps only ! Millions of Rupees were squandered about in the form of remuneration to the Police informers and supporters.

Still the movement failed to achieve its end. Causes were not many. In the first place the movement was not very well organized. There was no proper linking up of all the underground groups functioning at various places. Secondly there had not been made any previous preparation for the same. And thirdly it failed to get the Army on its side. Nevertheless the struggle was not in vain. It gave the country a new life a new thrill. It set up a fire which shall continue rising gradually till it burns up the might of the British Empire. It marked a distinct departure from our method and behaviour in the past.

The Congress Socialist Party by its glorious and thrilling role came into prominence. Its role endeared it to the masses. Public opinion swung on to its side and though it was banned throughout the country, the masses were loud in its praises and anxiously looked forward to the day when it would take its position among them once again, stronger than ever before.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRESENT POSITION

The Congress Socialist Party today is stronger than ever before. After about seven years of incarceration its members and workers have once again found themselves to enjoy certain limited freedom of action. It is marshalling its forces, and setting to work in right earnest. Its immediate as well as the ultimate object is to prepare the country for still another, and this time the final, struggle for Independence which is bound to come, and prevent it from being a party to the policy of constitutionalism which the Congress has resorted to.

Unprecedented repression, which was let loose in August 1942, continued unabated throughout that year and even the next. Repeated attempts of the moderate and other elements in the country and abroad, to persuade the British Government at home to bring about a solution of the Indian Dead-lock, met with utter failure. Even when Mahatma Gandhi went on hunger strike in early 1943 and his condition became critical, the authorities refused to be moved at all. Appeals of prominent British and American statesmen even failed to produce any result. The British Government remained firm on its stand hoping against hope that the Congress would become a dead body as a result of the malicious propaganda carried on against it in the form of such hooklets as. "The Congress Responsibility for disturbances 1942-43" etc. and the incarceration of its leaders. These hopes however were belied soon and the world pressure

compelled them to realize the necessity of bringing about solution of the Indian Dead-lock.

The improvement in the war situation all along the front in the favour of the Allies facilitated this task. The Churchillian Government however wanted the Congress to give up the Quit India resolution first. The Congress Leaders could not agree to such a thing. The resolution was passed by the A. I. C. C., and the A. C. C. was the sole body now to renounce it. The pressure from all Pro-Indian-Aspiration-Quarters throughout the world however compelled even such a diehard as Churchill to order the release of Mahatma Gandhi in 1944.

The situation however remained where it was before Mahatma Gandhi was released but he was not allowed to see the members of the Working Committee. Whole the 1944 passed away without any change being effected in the official attitude. Early in 1945, however the country became astir with the rumours about the new approach Britain was going to make to India. The Viceroy Lord Wavell, flew to London and remained in close negotiations with the Government at home for several weeks. He flew back at last and shortly after his arrival in India made the historic announcement on June 15, 1945, that the British Government at home had decided to take steps to ease the Political Dead-lock in India and that the release of all the members of the Congress working committee, and a meeting of all the leaders of Indian opinion to be held at Simla, before the last week of the same month, were the first two immediate steps to be taken. The Conference—Simla Conference—as it is popularly known proved a failure.

Much has been said about it already and I need not add anything more. Was it an Election stunt or an earnest, and sincere attempt, is also an issue no longer undecided. The failure of the Simla Conference was considered as unfortunate and the Viceroy took all the responsibility for it on his own shoulders. No further attempt was made to solve the deadlock even when the Labour Government with Mr. Attlee as its head came into power. Only an announcement was made that Provincial and Central Elections would be held in the end of the year and before March 1946. The policy of Government was embodied in the statement "Nothing doing till elections."

The British Government, whether Labour or Conservative, have seldom been even slightly sincere and earnest about the welfare of India. Before the Elections, immediate abolition of the Secretary of State for India's post, was declared to be one of the first and foremost objects of the Labour Party. Immediate grant of the Dominion Status and appointment of a British High Commissioner in India was also promised. None of these promises were however fulfilled when the Labour Government came to power.

The World War came to an end at last in August 1945. The war in Europe had ended even so far back as May 1945. Britain emerged out of it as a bankrupt and practically washed-out nation. She no longer was the premier country in the world. She no more ruled the seas. Her empire simmered with discontent and ill will against her. In November 1945 her representative government committed one of the greatest blunders it had ever

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done in the form of sanctioning the trial of I. N. A. Leaders. The taking up of their cause by the Indian National Congress gave an extreme importance to it. The Trial proved a liability. Unprecedented enthusiasm was created among the masses. Even the members of His Majesty's forces were affected. The disunity among the Indian communities, made so much of by the British Government, was proved to be a myth and product of the Government in power. The problem of conflicting loyalties also came up uppermost in the minds of the Indian soldiers. The story of the formation and growth of I. N. A. dealt a death blow to the theory of non-violence as well. Even when the Court Martial convicted the accused and passed the sentence of transportation for life on them, the Comander-in-chief felt compelled by the dictates of reason and farsightedness to order the commutation of their sentence and release.

India became a powder house. R. I. A. F. strikes spread throughout the country. R. I. N. Ratings strike thrilled the Nation and demonstrated to all that they could not tolerate the treatment meted out to them any more. Palestine disturbances also degraded the British Position further.

The British Government was alarmed. India appeared to be on the point of breaking into a revolution. It was clear as crystal to all. The shrewd British Government decided to avert this calamity and acted promptly by announcing that an official Cabinet Mission was flying to India shortly, to negotiate with the Leaders of different

sections of Indian opinion, with a view to enabling India to enjoy full Independence. Mr. Clement Attlee's speech on the floor of the House on March 15, was important and historic indeed. It marked a distinct departure from all the previous lines of approach, and declared in unmistakable terms, that "a minority this time shall not be allowed to obstruct the advance of majority towards freedom."

The Congress Socialist Party at that time was still not functioning properly. Though the warrants against Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali the Brave Bengali Lady had been cancelled and she was working openly among the masses, Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, Professor Ram Manohar Lohia and several other prominent Socialist workers were still behind the bars. Mr Achuyat Patwardhan shortly after the restrictions upon him had been removed and warrants cancelled, told in a public meeting the Policy and Programme of the Congress Socialist Party. All the workers were opposed to the policy of constitutionalism. Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali openly declared that nothing good was to result from the forthcoming talks. Nevertheless the C. S. P. Leaders decided to remain neutral in the forthcoming negotiations and not to prove an obstacle in the way of the Congress Leaders in any way.

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on March 24. During the first week of their arrival the members of the Mission—Sir Stafford Cripps—Lord Pethic Lawrence and Mr. A. V. Alexander—interviewed the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, the Governors of the provinces, and the members of the Viceroy's Council, with a view to find the official

view-point regarding the political situation in the country. Then came the turn of the Leaders of the Indian opinion. On May 5. Tripartite conference commenced at Simla. The conference was attended by four members each of the Congress and Muslim League. The Congress was represented by Pt. Nehru, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Muslim League by Mr. Jinnah, Nawabzada—now Mr.—Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab—Now Mr—Ismail Khan and Mr, Abdul Rab Nishtar. The Cabinet Mission along with the Viceroy formed the Third party.

While the conference was going on the members of the Executive Council tendered their resignation. The conference came to an end on May 12. The news cast a pall of gloom over the country. The Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy however decided to give their own award. Consequently on the night of May 16, the Secretary of States for India, broadcast from the A. I. R. Delhi and announced the proposals of the Cabinet Mission. They were as follows :—

1. Firstly there should be a union of India including both British India and the states which should deal with foreign affairs, defence, and communications and should have the power necessary to raise finance required for these subjects.

2. Secondly the union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and state representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the legislature should require for its decision

majority of the representatives present and voting, of each of the two major communities, as well as a majority of all members present and voting.

3. Thirdly all subjects other than union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces.

4. Fourthly the states retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the union.

5. Fifthly the provinces should be free to form groups with Executive and Legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.

6. Sixthly the constitution of the union and of the groups should contain a provision whereby any province could by majority of votes of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of ten years, and at ten yearly intervals thereafter.

The detailed scheme points out that the Constituent Assembly would automatically divide into three groups A, B, and C, for the purpose of framing the constitution of those particular groups. One member for roughly one million has been the broad basis on which representation has been granted to different communities in the Constituent Assembly. B. group consists of Frontier, Sindh and Punjab and C. of Bengal and Assam.

The proposals were well received in League quarters. They in the words of the League President Mr. M. A. Jinnah himself, conceded the substance of Pakistan in the form of compulsory grouping of provinces. The

Congress circles however did not appreciate them much, though Mahatma Gandhi started singing their praises to the sky, even before their announcement. The Sikhs resented them most as no special weightage or privilege had been conceded to them this time, and threatened to set up a Morcha against the government. The Scheduled castes also objected to them greatly and the Hindu Maha Sabha circles disliked them the most.

The cabinet mission proposals also envisaged the setting up of an interim Government immediately. This task was however left entirely to his Excellency the Viceroy of India, Lord Wavell.

The Congress Socialist Party has been opposed to any sort of dealings with the foreign Government ever since its birth. It has never had any belief in the work inside the councils unless it were purely on Socialistic lines. It believes in direct struggle of the masses and works with a view to preparing them for the same. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain—the General Secretary of the party who was released on April 12, 1946—Speaking at a public meeting in Bombay on May 20, 1946 said : "A bitter struggle is ahead. The interim Government contemplated under the Cabinet Mission proposals should make a declaration of Independence for India, the Viceroy should no more have a voice in the affairs of the country and the Interim Government should demand an immediate withdrawal of the British troops from India" This was just an advice to the Interim Government to test its effectiveness. The Congress Socialist party's stand was represented in the joint statement issued by Mr. Jai

Prakash Narain, Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, and Mr. Achayat Patwardhan, from Bombay on June 8, 1946, on the eve of the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. It read.

"The Indian people are facing a momentous decision which will finally determine the direction of their political effort in the present and immediate future. The Indian National Congress has shaped and directed this effort for over sixty years, and it has evolved and established through many struggles the unalterable essentials of real freedom for the people of this land. Whatever decision we are called upon to take must be examined strictly in terms of the fundamentals of our Nationalism.

- (1) Abolition of every vestige of foreign domination
- (2) The political and economic unity of our people.
- (3) A growing equality in our political and economic relationship expressed through democratic form of administration
- (4) A common code of fundamental rights establishing a uniform and equal status for every citizen in political, social, and economic spheres, overriding religious or regional differences.

"Should we hold fast to those fundamentals, refusing to whittle down our essential demands, and count no cost too great? Such a decision may lead us once again into conflict with the powers that are with all that follows in the wake of the conflict.

Or should we in alternative accept to work along with parties and persons who have here-to-fore opposed us at every step in spirit of cooperation and compromise? We are at the cross roads and whatever decision we take on the British Cabinet proposals must be determined by the essentials which have sustained us in every crisis during the past.

"Complete Independence is only an expression unless it means the end of the British Domination direct or indirect. This demands the withdrawal of the British troops even before the meeting of the Constituent Assembly as it must possess sovereign status. It is equally necessary to eliminate the British capitalist interests which act either on their own, or in alliance with the Indian capitalists and even by destiny for over a century.

"Similarly the powers exercised by the Viceroy both as the Governor General and as the Crown Representative must end in the interim period itself, if a free India is to emerge out of our present deliberations. The absence of primary civil liberties in the states, and their violation by the princes during this period of transition, would defeat our objective. In the second place we want to found our freedom on National Unity and Democracy. Any compromise which we are called upon to make must always be subjected to a single test. Does it consolidate our unity? A Central Government cannot establish unity in any state in the world of to day by its control over the foreign policy and Defence alone. Foreign policy may be defeated by the lack of cohesiveness and solidarity in relation to foreign trade and

economic relationships. These along with planning must be recognized as the irreducible minimum of effective central authority. It would be futile to create a central Government that presides over its own ineffectiveness by lack of sufficient authority.

Backdoor Influence

"The compulsory grouping of provinces opens door to the exercise of backdoor influence in Indian economic life by British monopolist interests which the central authority would be powerless to resist.

"The substance of Independence is shaped by the forces of democracy within the new state: When its foundations are being laid in a totally undemocratic fashion, Independence must remain a mirage. We cannot forget that hundreds of Congressmen were still in Jail when the present legislatures were created by the electors tampering with the electorates in the Muslim constituencies in more than one province. These legislatures are therefore not at all representative of the real forces of Indian Nationalism. A Constituent Assembly elected out of them will merely caricature democracy.

"The British Government has not approached its self-chosen duty with honesty of purpose or directness of effort. They have thus further encouraged the forces of disruption by refusing to demand from the princes a clear and uniform charter of civil rights here and now. This single instance would suffice to throw light on their motive. The Labour Government has proved that Socialism at home does not mean liquidation of Imperialism abroad.

"The proposal of compulsory grouping denies the autonomy of provinces and thereby removes the keystone from the constitutional arch—under these circumstances any participation in their plan can only lead to further disruption of our national forces. The Congress must reject these proposals and refuse to elect members to such a constituent assembly and move forward to the convening of a Constituent Assembly directly elected by the adult men and women of India."

"India will have to wait for many decades if we were to depend upon British co-operation or good will for attaining our freedom. It will arise out of our own unaided effort to build up from below the people's constituent authority. Let every village and every Mohalla of our towns seek to build its own parallel authority. Let it survive to assume authority over its own affairs and seek to act as a sovereign free state in India."

"The Hindustan of our desire shall have no place for a soldier who is not our national, and none for capital which we do not dispose of as we will, and it will, grow with the glory of its improving freemen as one and united. Constitutional devices are here of little avail. A new state must be born. To create this new state of free India, the unretreating strength of our people is our sole weapon and the Indian National Congress its edge and point. So onwards to this final spurt of creative action of work and organization that will steel up our people and their Congress into a force irresistible like the elements."

The statement was issued on the eve of the Working Committee Meeting to let it have an indication of the Socialists' attitude towards the proposals. It was representative of unprejudiced thinking and reasoning. The arguments advanced were sound and reasonable but the Working Committee turned a deaf ear to them. Though it rejected the interim Government plan on account of parity between the Hindus and Muslims and its not being permitted to nominate a Muslim out of its own quota it accepted the long term proposals and referred resolution about it for ratification to the A. I. C. C.

The A. I. C. C. met at Bombay on July 6, 1946. The session was attended by about 350 delegates from all over the country. The C. S. P. decided to oppose the resolution and lead the left wingers. After the resolution had been commended by Maulana Azad, after he had vacated the presidential chair for Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sardar Patel had asked the A. I. C. C. either to accept or reject the resolution in toto, Mr. Ansar Harwani rose to oppose it and seek total rejection of it by the A. I. C. C. He was seconded and followed by Mr. Jai Prakash Narain who led the left wing opposition.

Mr. Narain pointed out that the Constituent Assembly the British Government had created could not bring the Swaraj for the people of India for which the Congress had fought all these years. He further added that the question before the country was not whether to accept the so-called Constituent Assembly Scheme sponsored by

British Imperialism but how to utilize the new forces that had been generated as a result of the '42 movement to drive the British out of India. The British cabinet mission in his opinion had come only to exploit the differences that they themselves had created between the Congress and the Muslim League. Though the Muslim League commanded a large following among the Muslims yet it was still an ally and friend of the British. The cabinet mission was asking the Congress now to swallow its principles and compromise with the League whose leader in 1942 had unashamedly alleged that 1942 struggle was against the Muslims. He advised the Congress to work among the Muslim masses instead of negotiating with the League leaders and expressed the hope that in such a way they would be able to loosen the League hold on the Muslim masses. He however expressed satisfaction on the rejection of the Interim Government plan.

Dealing with the constituent assembly he said "I feel the acceptance of Constituent Assembly foreshadows danger. The Constituent Assembly proposed by the British is far from our original idea which was given to us by Pt. Nehru. This Constituent Assembly is a creation of British Government and can never bring us the independence we have been fighting for. The British Government may promise to accept the constitution drawn up by the Constituent Assembly but then the British Government will themselves pull the wires in such a manner as not to allow us to frame a constitution that we all desire for a free

and independent India. If ever a difference of opinion arises between the Congress and the League in the Constituent Assembly and the differences are bound to arise then we have to go to the British Government for solution. And do you think we can expect fair play from the British Government in such a situation? If on the contrary the Constituent Assembly is the outcome of the strength of the people we can solve all our difficulties by an appeal to our people."

He further said that he could not see any reason for accepting so defective a proposal. A Constituent Assembly could succeed only if it worked in a free atmosphere and there could be no free atmosphere in India so long as British power remained and the British troops were stationed in the country. The only thing in his opinion that could be done was to tell the British people that such a restricted and curbed constituent assembly was not wanted.

Closing his speech he said. "There is only one way open to us and that is to strengthen the Congress organization and when we are sure of our own inherent strength to start a fight with the British Government compel them to quit India and make them understand that they have to transfer power and that can be done only by negotiating with Congress. I wish to make it clear that I am not opposing the Working Committee's decision merely to discredit the Working Committee but I honestly believe that the decision of the Working Committee is wrong and therefore it should not be ratified. The A. I. C. C. has a chance of righting that mistake and that should not be lost."

Mr. Jai Prakash was right. The British Government had actually "hoodwinked" the Congress. The Congress appeared to have forgotten the Quit India resolution. In the words of Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali "the policy of the Working Committee since the release of its member had been out of tune with the spirit of the Quit India resolution. It had forgotten that the British power could only be overcome by a physical struggle and not by parleys and negotiations. It had given up the policy of Non-cooperation and adopted one of Co-operation with the British Government."

There had been no great advance in the proposals on the Cripps proposals which the country firmly rejected in 1942. One could ask the Working Committee as did Mr. Achayat Patwardhan in the A. I. C. C. "Have we at least been able to remedy the defects in the Cripps' proposals"?

The subjects allotted to the centre clearly left out finances and economic policy. No Government could be strong unless it had the power over the purse and could co ordinate and direct the economic policy of the whole country. The grouping clause was a negation of democracy and the Clive street European capitalists were behind this clause. States position remained unchanged. Customs remained out of the central authority. There were indeed so many defects that one really wonders how the Congress Working Committee decided to accept the proposals. Was it as a result of the unwillingness of the members to enter into still another struggle?

The A. I. C. C. meeting concluded on July 7 and both of the resolutions were ratified as desired by the Working Committee.

The Congress Socialist Party however is not a party to this decision and is opposed to any participation in the plan. Its policy regarding this point was laid down by Mr. Jai Prakash Narain in a statement on June 29, 1946.

He said. " The Congress Working Committee is acting in a very undemocratic manner. It has shown a singular disregard for all democratic form of politics. Even if the Congress accepts the long term proposals we will not associate ourselves at any stage with the working out of the scheme. We will on the other hand tell the people that the struggle for Swaraj has not ended and that they would have to fight again and they should prepare themselves from to-day for such a fight.

The next A. I. C. C. is not going to be more than a farce as it is going to be faced with a *fait accompli*.

" Our approach to the present situation is three fold. Firstly we wish to keep the perspective of the struggle before the people as against constitutionalism. Secondly we wish to continue to prepare the masses for struggle whenever or in whatever form it may come. Thirdly regarding constitutional issue we would attempt to place before the people a true picture of freedom of the people's Swaraj and of the process of constitution making. The present is not a true Constituent Assembly as it will not be brought into being by the people themselves but by the British Government. The method of its composition

and other details have been set by a Foreign Government and not by the people. It meets under the Aegis of a foreign Government which means that the Constituent Assembly will not be a sovereign body as it will not be formed by the people of India. Any kind of weightage or parity is wholly undemocratic."

This the Policy and Programme of the Congress Socialist Party to day. It is a party within Congress and its object is not to oppose or discredit it from within or without. Where it differs it criticise it with a view to correcting that policy.

There are certain differences between the Congress Socialists with the Congress. They however do not concern the present day politics but concern the future form of Government. On the present situation however the difference of the C. S. P. with the Congress High Command or the majority in the Congress is, that it is drifting towards constitutionalism. The C. S. P. however does not believe that the country would achieve its goal by following that path. It believes that the British Government shall not Quit unless it is pushed out.

The Fundamental difference of the C. S. P. with the communist party is that the latter is a party which acts not in the interests of India but in the interests of a third power-Russia. It has no Independent Policy of its own and acts according to the dictates of Russia.

The C. S. P. to-day is trying to work out the programme as laid down in Mr. J. P. Narains press statement of June 29, 1946. Interim Government has been formed at

the centre. The Viceroy has however made clear once again that the grouping clause remains as it was intended to, and that there shall be allowed maximum freedom in day to-day administration of the country. Muslim League has boycotted this Government. Calcutta Riots have filled the country with horror. The Congress Socialist Party however remains unconcerned with the constitutionalism. It hopes the day is not far off when 1942 shall have to be repeated again and is settling down in earnest to the task of preparing the country for that struggle.

With Members of the Congress High Command in the cabinet at the centre, the present policy and programme of the Congress Socialist Party is interesting indeed. But the day is not far off when this shall be proved to be only a prelude to the most glorious chapter of the most gallant activity to be written in the History of India.

APPENDIX I TO ALL FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM

This is Mr Jai Prakash Narain's Third Letter to all fighters for freedom. The first and the second were written, and circulated, while Mr Jai Prakash was in active Command of the August Revolution. All the three are brilliant examples of objective analysis, fearless criticism and revolutionary lead. They have been written at three different decisive phases of the revolutionary epoch, starting with August 9, 1942. The first was published in "Congress Responsibility for disturbances" by Sir Richard Tottenham. Extracts from the second were published by the Communist Party of India in a pamphlet of theirs. We are thankful to the "allies" for the service they have thus, even if inadvertently, rendered to the cause of the National Democratic Revolution in India.

FRIENDS,

Soon after my release when I had sent you my greetings through "Janata", I had promised that later I would place before you my views on the present situation and explain to you our present tasks. I regret that there has been so much delay in doing this. The delay was unavoidable, because it was necessary to meet colleagues and consult with them. All this has been done, and it is possible now to place before you something in a definite shape.

Before this, through various statements jointly or severally issued, my colleagues and I have attempted to place our views before you on important questions as they arose. You have been acquainted with our stand in the last A.I.C.C. Below I attempt more systematically and fully to express my views, and I hope also the views of my colleagues, on the present situation and indicate the tasks that face us and the methods we should adopt to accomplish them

The present situation is one of transition and rapid change. The A.I.C.C. has agreed that Congressmen should go to the British sponsored Constituent Assembly. An interim government under the British Viceroy might soon be functioning. This government whenever it may come into being cannot be a free government of a free country till the Viceroy and British armed forces and other British personnel quit India. To beg that this government be allowed to function as a free government is to beg the question. Those who have the power to hand over power at their pleasure, have also the power to take it back at their pleasure. Therefore, let us not be duped by the talk of an interim government being "in effect" the government of a free India.

Could then the so-called Constituent Assembly bring us freedom? In other words, could that Assembly declare India an independent republic and enforce that declaration? Could it, for instance, appoint a provisional government and *force* the Viceroy to hand over all power to it and quit India? Could the Provisional Government pack off all British soldiers and military and civil officers to Britain? Could that government tear up the strangle-hold of British finance over this country? Could the Constituent Assembly dissolve itself and empower the *free* Provisional Government, after the British had quit, to convene a real Constituent Assembly elected by the people on the basis of unrestricted adult suffrage? Could the proposed Constituent Assembly take all these steps, everyone of which is essential to lead India to full freedom and democracy? It would be a grave folly to suppose that in the existing circumstances and with the present co-relation of forces it could ever be possible for the proposed Constituent Assembly to take any of these steps and achieve any of these objectives. But even if we were to suppose for a moment that the Assembly could make this attempt, the British would be certain to bar its way. Then if the Assembly were sincere and honest it would have to accept the British challenge and invoke its mass sanctions in order to enforce its will. The Viceroy who would have called the Assembly

to begin with would then step in and order its dissolution. Thus an all-out war of independence would ensue, out of which should emerge a real Constituent Assembly of the people and free democratic and united Republic of India.

The Constituent Assembly, however, is not very likely to follow these steps. Aware of what President Nehru has described as "the compulsion of facts," i.e., aware of the limitations of its sovereignty, aware of its weaknesses, aware of the British stooges and enemies of freedom and democracy in its ranks, aware of the presence of the British Army and the British Viceroy—aware of all this and more, the Constituent Assembly might choose to tread what I am sure is going to be described as the path of realism. In other words, the Assembly might decide to make compromise after compromise, producing in the end neither freedom, nor democracy, nor national unity. So, the nation, thwarted and disillusioned, would have to turn once again to the path from which it is being misled to-day—the path of revolutionary action, the path of resistance and struggle, the straight but difficult path of freedom.

Thus we see that in either case, i.e., whether the Constituent Assembly "succeeds" or whether it "fails," a struggle for freedom is inevitable. Any one who has a correct appreciation of the present co-relation of forces in this country should not find it difficult to accept this conclusion. To-day, it is still possible for British imperialism to face us with the "compulsion of facts." Till this compulsion is removed by revolutionary action, freedom would be an illusion. Nor can any one expect to change the facts of the present situation by argument, concession and diplomatic finesse.

We therefore reach the conclusion—and it will bear repetition—that the struggle for freedom does not cease with the acceptance of the British constitutional proposals. That struggle will continue. In fact, the character and scope of that struggle will become deeper and wider. To the struggle for liberty will be added the struggle for national unity and bread.

A Common Struggle.

Acceptance of the British proposals will loosen many forces of national disintegration. It is commonly supposed that one positive contribution that the British have made to Indian polity is to unify the country; and it is a common lament that they foolishly enough are bent to-day upon destroying that monument of their noble work. Nothing could be greater folly than this view. Far from creating unity in Indian life the British have always done their best to divide us: to divide Hindus and Muslims, to divide Harijans from other Hindus, to create a Sikh minority, to detach princely India from the rest of the country, to set the princes against the people, to bolster up the Zamindars into pillars of British rule, to bribe Capital and the middle class to turn into enemies of their country. That is, in their hundred years' rule they have done all that was possible to bring about a situation in which weakening of British rule was sure to mean chaos and disintegration. The only unity under British rule is the unity of a dictatorial regime and not a people's or a nation's unity. Such positive unity, has been created by the Congress; and this unity to-day is in jeopardy. Therefore, the struggle for national unity is bound to acquire a special importance with the acceptance of the British proposals.

Secondly, the impending constitutional changes are bound to bring to the fore economic and class issues. The form of Swaraj, the question, "Swaraj for whom?" Will no longer remain academic or remote questions, but will become matters of immediate and urgent importance demanding immediate answers and affecting all our politics not theoretically but practically. That is, the struggle for bread, always an integral part of the struggle for freedom, will move up to the front line and acquire an importance no less than any other.

I should make it clear that these are not three separate struggles, but aspects or parts of one common struggle of the people. At different stages, one or the other aspect receives a greater or less emphasis, but as the present

constitutional plans develop, all these are likely to assume equal importance.

As matters stand, this common struggle of the people would have to be waged in the context of a Constituent Assembly, possibly of interim government, and later on in the context of a union government, group and provincial governments.

The Congress, of which we are a part, seems likely to be associated with all these developments. As such, it seems certain, that the Congress struggle for liberty, unity and bread will be conducted, if at all, through the constitutional and state machinery. Already the Congress is being converted into a parliamentary party. If this process goes on to its logical conclusion, there can be little doubt that the Congress must fail to achieve much success in this threefold struggle. A constitutional and administrative machinery might be of use in certain circumstances, but situated as we are, the people's struggle must be carried on mainly outside the Legislatures and the portals of government departments.

To carry on this struggle is our job to-day—the job of all the fighters for freedom.

11.

"Mass Sanctions."

How shall we wage this struggle? By terrorism? By sporadic violence? By fratricide? By dacoities? By incendiarism? Obviously no. At the present moment the only manner in which we can wage this struggle is by forging *mass sanctions*. The creation of mass sanctions includes, first, the psychological preparation of the masses for a struggle; second, the building up of organizations of the masses, such as peasant and labour unions, volunteer corps student and youth organizations, village republics, weavers' co-operatives and myriad other organizations which would help in different ways to develop the collective strength and consciousness of the people. To all this must be added

the over-all task of strengthening and vitalising the Congress organisation and renewing and extending its effective contacts with the people. A full picture of the task of creating mass sanctions in so far as it relates to the present phase of our struggle, is laid out below in the section dealing with our programme.

Here let me illustrate my meaning of the term "mass sanctions" in the context of national unity. National unity cannot be imposed from above. It must be based on unity at the bottom. Such unity can be brought about, or at least a considerable success be gained in the task, by patient political work among the Muslims, by the development of economic or class organisations, such as labour unions, *Kisan Sabhas*, weavers' co-operatives, by social reform among the Hindus, by encouraging common cultural and recreational activities, by strengthening those forces in society that by their very nature work for national unity, such as the need for a strong frontier, the need for a co-ordinated plan of economic development, the need for a common economic system, the need for a common medium of speech, etc., and in many other ways. The first requirement, I need hardly stress, is for every freedom fighter to be completely free from communal or caste prejudice or arrogance, and to practice in his personal life the principle of the equality of all human beings.

The mass sanctions for national unity are particularly weak at the moment. Their development is a foremost priority on the list of our present tasks.

Lest there should be misunderstanding I must point out that the work of developing mass sanctions cannot be split into compartments and sanctions for each objective created separately from the others. The political, economic and social, sanctions overlap, inter-penetrate and supplement each other and form part of one broad movement of the people.

III

The Problem of Organization

Before I proceed to explain our present programme of work, it is necessary to place before you my views, which

I am glad to say are also the views of most of my colleagues, regarding the form of organization through which fighters for freedom could function to-day. During the August revolution all of us functioned in the name of the Congress. That was as it should have been, because it was the policy of the whole Congress then to fight. Any Congressman who kept away from the fight or opposed it, opposed and betrayed the Congress. To-day the position is different. The official policy of the Congress to-day is not a policy of struggle or preparation for a struggle, it is rather a policy of compromise and constitutionalism. Therefore, it is not possible for us to-day, who still adhere to the policy of struggle and revolutionary action to function in the name of the Congress.

But, at the same time I am very clear in my mind that it would do the greatest possible injury to the cause of freedom in this country if we were to leave the Congress and form a parallel mass organisation. There is no doubt that there is going to be a growing divergence between our line of work and that of the present Congress leadership. But the leadership is not identical with the organization. The present Congress is as much the result of your labours and sacrifices as of any other group within it. You have as much right to speak in the name of the Congress as any one else. The Congress represents the greatest organized national and social force in the country and exercises unprecedented power over the mass mind. As such it is an instrument *par excellence* for a mass struggle. It would be foolish to give up this instrument *as long as the possibility exists of its being utilized for a revolutionary purpose*. I believe that this possibility still exists to-day. Therefore I have no doubt in my mind that we must continue to work within the Congress, doing our utmost to strengthen it, trying by active work and service of the people to convert it to our views. If the present Congress leadership persists in its attempt to transform the Congress into a mere parliamentary body with no constructive programme, relying entirely on governmental machinery to serve or rule over the people, turning more and more bureaucratic, keeping

its hold over the Congress organization by the distribution of patronage and largesse, we shall no doubt be unavoidably drawn into conflict with it. But, at the same time if we carry on our work among the people with energy and devotion, we shall undoubtedly be in a position to rally the Congress masses around us and resurrect the Congress from its parliamentary debris.

We arrive then at two important conclusions: (1) It is not possible for us now as during the August uprising to work and act in the name of the Congress: (2) we must continue to work within the Congress. The problem now arises, how are we to function so that we may act in an organized and co-ordinated manner and provide all fighters with a political and ideological focus. This question assumes an added importance when we remember that our activities are not confined to our work within the Congress alone. We have to function in trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and many other organizations which are outside the Congress. It were possible perhaps had we to work in the Congress alone to function as a loose group, but if we are to fulfil our present tasks efficiently, an organized focus of the type described above has to be created.

I have thought earnestly over this question and consulted with my colleagues and have come to the conclusion that we have in the Congress Socialist Party a ready-made *basis* for an organization of the type we require to-day. I believe that after proper overhauling and reorganization the C.S.P. would serve our purpose admirably. The C.S.P. has a fine record of political work, and the contribution it made to the August Revolution was, even hostile critics agree, worthy of commendation. The old Party had certain organizational weaknesses, part of which was due to the experiment it had made in socialist and left unity. These weaknesses can and will be removed. My recent contacts with August fighters has shown me that while there are a few who cannot rid themselves of old prejudices, the vast majority do look upon the C.S.P. with hope and show a great deal of good will towards it. I therefore

in party's Statement of policy. Here I wish to give only a general outline of the work we must take up immediately.

Perhaps we could understand our present task better if a picture of the future struggle were before us. The picture I have in view is this : first atomisation and dislocation of British administration by an extension of the '42 pattern of struggle ; second, simultaneous building up of units of free government in both town and country and protection of these from British attempts at reconquest—the local and regional swaraj governments ultimately coalescing to form the Free Republic of India. This pattern includes paralysis of British administration by non-co-operation—of Indian civil and military personnel, as well as its active co-operation—or at least the co-operation of a part of it—in building up and protecting the free revolutionary government. It includes the struggle of the Congress Ministries from within the administrative system. It includes a total industrial strike. It includes seizure of zamindari lands by the royats. It includes a revolt of the people of the States against the tyranny of the princes. The outstanding feature that would distinguish this struggle from those gone before including the '42 rebellion, would be to my mind emergence of local and regional swaraj governments and the carrying out of the further task of the revolution by these governments themselves. Details could be added to this picture but I believe its broad outlines are given above.

With this picture before me I shall attempt to sketch briefly an outline of our present programme.

Our immediate purpose, as we have seen, is to prepare for a revolutionary struggle for freedom. This preparation includes different types of work. Naturally, there are certain types of work which I cannot discuss here.

The Worker.

But before I proceed to discuss the work itself, let me say a word about the worker. If I were asked to-day what

was our most important job at this stage, I would reply: *selection and training of the revolutionary worker*. The agitational phase of our struggle has long since past. We are already in the actual revolutionary phase, the main task of which is to take over power. To-day we need a very different kind of Congressmen, a different kind Party comrade, from what was needed before the war. The revolutionary of to-day should be trained not only in agitational, but also, and largely, in organizational work. He should be acquainted with both the destructive and constructive tasks of the revolution. He should be an effective bridge between the revolutionary organization and the people among whom he works; that is he should be able not only to impart his revolutionary fervour to them, but also to acquaint them with their place and tasks in the revolution. He should be honest, fearless, disciplined and hard-working. The same worker would not do far every kind of work; so, apart from general training, and according to the worker's bent and capacity, specialised training, such as for trade-union work, village work, press and publicity work, survey work, etc., must be given to selected workers.

Our country is very large; and in an emergency it may not be possible for a central body to issue directions to revolutionary workers in different parts of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to train local leaders who will know how to act in a moment of national crisis.

This training of workers has to be given both through work and study and discussion. For the second part of the training, i.e. for study and discussion, it would be necessary to open study camps and schools, either of temporary or permanent character. For this instructors and literature are necessary.

Specialised Work.

I shall turn now to the programme of work itself. For the purpose of exposition I shall divide the type of work

which it is possible to discuss here into two parts: general and specialised work. In the second category I place such activities as trade union and *Kisan Sabha* work, student and volunteer organisation, organisation of producers, such as weavers' or cane-growers, co-operatives, co-operative farming, and work of similar nature. With this kind of specialised work, we have been more or less acquainted. But this work has to be much more systematically done and extended to newer fields. Training, knowledge and study has to be brought to bear on it. Above all, our central revolutionary purpose and social philosophy must animate and integrate the whole of it and prevent it from degenerating into disjointed sectional movements for immediate economic betterment, or into mere demonstrative or agitational channels. A co-operative or a trade union or peasant movement can easily slide into what is known as Economism. This has to be prevented. Further take volunteering or the student movement. It is not enough that a volunteer organization should restrict itself to drill and physical training, crowd control and demonstration. Each volunteer must know some means, however humble, of serving his community, and his officers, at least, must know the place of his men in the coming revolution and their posts of duty then. The Students' Congress has very largely become an agitational movement. That is not enough. The Congress must take up constructive activities, among the students themselves and in the community in which they live. For instance, educational work (teaching the children of the poor, adult literacy, (*Hindustanee Prachar*), cultural work (discussions, debates, theatres, art exhibition), health drives, survey work, helping in trade union or similar activities, excursions, work in the villages, during vacations, student serving centres, self help groups, etc.

Trade Union Congress.

The Trade Union Congress has been a politically backward movement in this country. This backwardness was never more evident than during the war years, when the

A.I.T.U.C. was unable to give a political lead to the workers of India. Even when the whole country was convulsed by a revolutionary upsurge and large sections of the working class were drawn into it, the A.I.T.U.C. remained paralysed and unable to say whether it was on the side of the Revolution or the imperialist power. This was largely due to the betrayal of the Communists Party of India. This political paralysing of the T.U.C. must be cured and the Trade Union movement brought in line with the revolutionary struggle and the workers enabled to play their proper part in it.

The Kisan movement lies disrupted and broken to-day—very largely again due to the tactics of the communists. That part of the Kisan movement which stands by the national struggle must be united again and the whole movement built up anew.

Producer's co-operative and co-operative farming are new types of work which I recommend. A beginning might have been made here or there before, but generally speaking it is new work for us. Wherever suitable cadre are available and other necessary conditions exist, a beginning should be made in this direction.

In a previous section I have said that creation of sanctions for national unity is a high priority on our work schedule. I wish to repeat that here and draw your attention again to what I have said above in that connection.

I have not exhausted the list of special types of work which we have to undertake. The above is only an illustrative list. There is in addition, to give only one instance, a very special type of work to be done among women. Some body who is more competent to speak about it may later advise you regarding this very important work. Then to give other instances, there is Gandhiji's constructive programme. Such items of it as we may take up, such as removal of untouchability, prohibition, village sanitation, basic education, etc., should be made part of our programme. In short, there is no dearth of work or means to

serve, organise, educate the people and to develop their strength and ability to fight. There is dearth only of workers to do all those works, and to do it properly and well.

General work.

I shall turn now to the general type of our work. In the fore-front of this type of work I must place Congress, work, i.e., building up, strengthening and popularising the Congress. The hold that the Congress has over the people is greater to-day than over before. But generally speaking the Congress organization has become moribund, and due to the parliamentary programme a considerable amount of corruption has developed within. It should be our foremost task first to activate the Congress Committees and rebuild the bridge of service that should exist between them and the people. Second, we should ever be vigilant and fight corruption within the Congress in all its forms,

"Activate the Congress Committees" is a somewhat hackneyed phrase. So, I should perhaps amplify my meaning. It is obvious that the Congress Committees can best be activated only if the A.I.C.C. and the provincial committees to give a lead. It should be the job of these committee to give directions from time to time, assigning a certain job of work to be done within a certain time-limit, such as a certain survey to be made, a certain drive to be launched, let us say against untouchability or for communal harmony, adult literacy, grain banks, enrolment of rural volunteers, etc. These higher committees should produce periodical talking points for its workers and produce other literature to help them in their day to day work and to understand their problems. These committees should do research work and political planning.

I see no reason why the Congress as a whole should not take up and make its own all the items of work described above or those I am about to describe below. Yet, I cannot say when, or if at all, these committees will begin to

function in this manner. In the meanwhile wherever we are able to work through the Congress Committees it should be our job to push the whole programme described here through them. But where it is not possible to do so we would have to work out this programme through the Party branches, which should attempt to associate all other genuine fighters with them.

Coming to other items of general work, let me first explain what I mean by the term. Our specialised work deals, as we have seen with different sections or classes of our people. But when we take up a community as a whole, such as village or a town or a ward in a town, and treat it as a whole in our work. I describe that work as general work. In a village we may, for instance, form a Kisan sabha, or in a town a labour union. That would be specialised work. But if we approach the village or the town as a whole, I would call it general work.

Village work.

Let me take up village work first. The ultimate object, say after six months' work is to establish a *gram raj*. A gram raj as a self-governing village, a village republic, not merely a panchayat. This *gram raj* is to be built up by the villagers themselves, by their own initiative and not by the governmental agencies. The *gram rajs* as I conceive them would make foreign rule unnecessary, would become the centres of struggle and resistance during a revolution and would constitute the bricks with which the structure of the free Indian Republic could be built.

Before *gram raj* can be formed in a village a great deal of constructive work will have to be done. I suggest the following types of work for this :

1. Enrolment of Congress members. Attempt should be made to enrol every adult villager. Meeting of the enrolled members should be held. Flag salutation.

2. A cultural centre should be opened where news papers should be read and such other activities conducted as adult literacy, dramatics, folk songs, study circle, library, posters, agricultural advice etc.
3. Sevalal and *Akhada* work,
4. Problems of sanitation, roads, bunds, etc., tackled in a practical way. Collective labour for common purposes, should be encouraged.
5. Untouchability work.
6. Communal harmony work.
7. Prohibition.
8. Survey of conditions.
9. Redress of grievances.
10. Founding of Grain Banks.
11. Propaganda in neighbouring villages.
12. Co-operative Marketing.
13. Women and child work.

In a village where work of this nature has been done by honest devoted workers who have succeeded in winning the full co-operation of the villagers, it should be possible in a few months to establish a *gram raj*, In such a village then it should be possible also to start co-operative farming and subsidiary co-operative industries.

Here is work that would need the best type of trained workers, and in numbers that can be almost unlimited. Here is work that goes to the very roots of Indian economic, political and social life and that is charged with the utmost revolutionary and constructive possibilities.

I have a similar picture of our urban work. In the towns and cities, wards or mohallas should be the community unit that we should take up as a whole. In a ward the same type of constructive work as described for the village with

modifications dictated by urban problems should be taken up through one or various centres. In this work care should be taken to approach the poorer classes in the city. Forms of service, education, propaganda, organisation, suitable for them should be evolved. Active members of the Students' Congress should be invited to participate in this work.

It is possible to elaborate further this programme of work but as an illustration it should serve its purpose. Local initiative and further experience may add to or subtract from it. I commend it now to you and I hope you will find it of some use.

Before I close I should like again to draw your attention to our central revolutionary purpose. Remember that the same work can be done in different ways and with different motives. Our governing motive should inform all the work we do and transform it into a revolutionary instrument.

Yours fraternally,
Jayaprakash Narayan.

APPENDIX II

MEERUT THESIS

(Statement on nature, task and Programme of the Party adopted at the time of Meerut Session 20, January 1936.)

Origin of the party

The Congress Socialist Party grew out of the experiences of the last two national struggles. It was formed at the end of the last civil disobedience movement by such Congressmen as came to believe that a new orientation of the national movement had become necessary—a redefinition of its objectives and revision of its methods. The initiative in this direction could be taken only by those who had a theoretical grasp of the forces of our present society. These naturally were those Congressmen who had come under the influence of and accepted Marxian Socialism. It was natural therefore, that the organization that sprang up to meet the needs of the situation took the description "Socialist". The word "Congress" prefixed to 'Socialist' only signified the organic relationship—past, present and future—of the organization with the national movement.

The socialist forces that were already in existence in the country were completely out of touch with the Congress and had no influence on the national movement. Therefore, there did not take place, as otherwise there would have, a fusion of the emergency Congress Socialist Party with the groups previously existing. Given the adoption of correct and sensible tactics by all the parties concerned, there is every likelihood of such a fusion taking place at a later stage.

Party's task.

The immediate task before us is to develop the national movement into a real anti-imperialist movement—a movement aiming at freedom from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation. For this it is necessary to wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away

from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary Socialism.

This task can be accomplished only if there is within the Congress an organized body of Marxian Socialists. In other words, our Party alone can, in the present conditions, perform this task. The strengthening and classification of anti-imperialist forces in the Congress depends largely on the strength and activity of our Party. For fulfilling the party's task it will also be necessary to co-ordinate all the other anti-imperialist forces in the country.

Work within the Congress.

Consistent with its task, the party should take only an anti-imperialist stand on Congress platforms. We should not in this connection make the mistake of placing a full socialist programme before the Congress. An anti-imperialist programme should be evolved for this purpose suiting the needs of workers, peasants and the lower middle classes.

It being the task of the party to bring the anti-imperialist elements under its ideological influence, it is necessary for us to be as tactful as possible. We should on no account alienate these elements by intolerance and impatience. The Congress constructive programme should not be obstructed or interfered with. It should however be scientifically criticized and exposed.

In Congress elections, we should not show keenness to "capture," committees and offices nor should we form alliances with politically undesirable groups for the purpose.

Party's Programme.

This does not mean that the party should not carry on socialist propaganda from its own platform. It must continue to do so and do it more systematically and rigorously.

It follows that the party's own programme must be a Marxist one, otherwise party will fail to fulfil task and leadership. Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must therefore fully understand the technique of revolution, the theory and practice of the class struggle, the nature of the state and the processes leading to the socialist society.

FAIZPUR THESIS

(Adopted at the 3rd Annual Conference 23,24 December 1937)

The present thesis is an extension of the Meerut thesis adopted by the conference of the party at its last session. While it reiterates the earlier thesis it seeks to incorporate the experiences of the last year and to take into account the development of the anti-imperialist movement that has taken place in the intervening period.

The United Front against Imperialism

The chief task facing us and all other anti-imperialists is the creation of a powerful national Front against Imperialism. This is not a task that has to be begun anew. The struggle against imperialism is on and has been on for many years past. It has now to be widened, integrated and raised to a higher stage of intensity.

While the working class and the peasantry has led in the past and is leading today important militant struggles against Imperialism, the main organized expression of the anti-imperialist movement has been the Indian National Congress. But as is evident it has not yet become an adequately consistent and effective anti-imperialist force. It does not yet embrace the broadest possible sector of the masses whether organized or unorganized, and still stands aloof from their day to day struggle for the satisfaction of their pressing immediate needs.

It is the task of all anti-imperialists in the country to bring together and unite all anti-imperialist sectors and to build up a mighty front against Imperialism, made up of

the broadest possible sector of the masses. It is clear that in our attempt to do so, it is the Congress that we must take as the basis and starting point, and we must attempt to make it an all-embracing united front against Imperialism. The Congress has already succeeded to a large extent in uniting wide forces of the Indian people for the national struggle and remains to day the principal existing mass organization of diverse elements seeking national liberation. It is for us now to find means to assist and extend that unity to a still wider front. This task though being a single whole, can be divided, for the purpose of elucidation into three main parts; our work within the Congress, our work among the masses outside the Congress; the task of integrating the anti-imperialist struggle outside and inside the Congress and consolidating the leadership of the anti-imperialist and left forces.

This Thesis is mainly concerned with the elaboration of the triple task.

Our Work within the Congress.

The Congress is organized at present on the basis of individual membership. Its members come mainly from the peasantry and middle class. Most of these members do not take any active part in the anti-imperialist movement and simply meet once a year to elect their delegates and representatives. The Congress Committees do not have any day to day programme of work. They have usually no contacts with the organization of peasants and workers and do not take any appreciable part in their day to day struggles. The only contact they could have had with the masses, apart from the fact that it was not calculated to develop mass struggle, was through the "constructive programme". But this programme too is not in the hands of the Congress Committees but autonomous associations like the A.I.S.A., A.I.V I A. etc. The form of open struggle—disobedience of specific laws—that the Congress has so far used does not give the masses wide scope for participation. It is not in fact a form of mass struggle which can develop only out of the day-to day struggle against exploitation and oppression.

The reason for this is that while the Congress is a mass organization, its leadership is predominantly bourgeois. This leadership is unable within the framework of its conceptions and interests to develop the struggle of the masses to a higher level. But it should be kept in view that the Congress leadership is no longer undivided. Recently a conscious Left has been forming within the Congress and this development is reflecting itself in the leadership also, in which a sharp division is taking place. But as yet Left is largely ineffective and effective leadership is in the hands of the Right. This should not be understood to mean that the class composition of the right is itself bourgeois. A part, of it is undoubtedly so. On the whole it is petty-bourgeois but it is under the dominance of bourgeois interests and bound by the limitations of the Indian bourgeoisie.

This analysis of the character of the Congress defines our task within it. In the words of Meerut thesis it is to "wean the anti-imperialist elements in the Congress away from its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the influence of Revolutionary socialism." The present thesis must further elucidate this.

The Meerut thesis conceives of the task in too narrow a manner. Our task within the Congress is not only to wean away the anti-imperialist elements from bourgeois leadership but also to develop and broaden the Congress itself as to transform it into a powerful anti-imperialist front. The problem is not only the one of the change of leadership. It requires a complete reorganization of the Congress from the bottom upwards. As it has already been pointed out this cannot be done by confining our activities to Congress alone. Here, however, let us see what we have to do within the Congress. Taking the organizational aspect, first, we must work for the democratization of its constitution so as to give more initiative to the primary members and committees and should endeavour to enlarge the membership and extend the organizations of the Congress further and make them active and alive. We should further try to bring the masses into the Congress by securing their representation in the committees of the latter. Till this is done

we should build up a close link between such organizations and committees for the purpose of work.

Our Alternative Programme.

As for the programme of the Congress, we should so shape it that it comes actively to develop the struggle of the masses taking their immediate demands as a basis. The formation of peasants' and workers' unions and active support to the struggle conducted by them should be kept in the fore-front of this programme. In all other possible ways also, working on the principles laid down above, we should endeavour to provide Congress Committees with a programme of day to day work among the masses.

We should try to rally the rank and file of the Congress workers around this alternative programme. The political backwardness of the rank and file is due to their lack of contact with the economic struggle of the masses. Propaganda alone will not radicalize them. They must be drawn into the peasant and labour movement so that they may realize that our programme is a more dynamic one and will raise the anti-imperialist struggle to a higher pitch.

The Meerut thesis declared that we have to bring the anti-imperialist movement under the leadership of revolutionary Socialism. It is necessary to further elucidate this. The anti-imperialist struggle in India is multi-class struggle of the peasantry and the working and middle classes. The working class in India though organizationally weak and politically not sufficiently conscious of its role, is none-the-less potentially the most revolutionary class. The struggle of the Indian masses for freedom will not reach its objective unless the working class is the vanguard of that struggle. Therefore it is our task as socialists to see that it assumes its historic role in the national movement. The leadership of revolutionary Socialism can mean nothing else.

Our Work Outside the Congress.

The anti-imperialist struggle cannot be separated from the day to day struggle of the masses. The development

of the latter is the basis for a successful fight against Imperialism. Therefore, our foremost task outside the Congress is to develop Independent organizations of the peasants and workers and of other exploited sections of the people.

Besides these class organizations we should also attempt to organize the youth of the country so as to mobilize the most active elements of the lower middle class.

We should not be content with the formation of these separate organizations. We should try to harness them in the anti-imperialist front. These organizations while functioning independently and carrying on their own programme should be linked up with the Congress Committees and there should be joint action as often as possible. This should ultimately lead us, as already pointed out, to the masses mobilized in these organizations entering the Congress through collective representation. Thus will the Congress become a wide national front against Imperialism. This transformation is bound to change the entire structure and leadership of the Congress which will be composed of the strongly welded alliance of the various anti-Imperialist classes, organized and unorganized consolidation of Socialist forces.

In the conditions of India, the conscious leadership of the anti-imperialist movement falls on the Socialist forces. These forces are unfortunately still divided. The Party from the beginning has stood for unity in the socialist ranks.

It is of the utmost importance that in the Congress in the mass movement outside, in all spheres of anti-imperialist activity a united lead is given. If Socialists speak with a divided voice there will be utter confusion and it will only retard the national struggle.

Till such unity is arrived at, the minimum that is necessary is agreement on the immediate tasks and lines of action. On the basis of this agreement the various Socialist groups should work together till the time we are in a position to form a united Party.

Apart from unity or agreement among Socialist ranks it is necessary that the forces of the left are also consolidated and an understanding developed within its leadership. The party should continue its efforts in this direction.

Organization of the Party.

Our party has generally grown in the last year. In certain provinces there has been a setback and the growth has not been uniform every where. While there are parties with a membership of hundreds, certain other parties, also quite active, have not enlarged their organization beyond a few score of members. It is obvious that the line of development and the scope of organization have not clearly been laid down. Without prejudice to the Marxist basis of our party, it is necessary to enlarge the membership of the party so as to include a wider section of Congress workers and conscious elements active in the labour, peasant and other movements.

APPENDIX III.

CONSTITUTION AND RULES FRAMED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN 1937.

Name. Name of the party shall be the All India Congress Socialist Party.

Objects. The objects of the party shall be the achievement of complete Independence, in the sense of separation from the British Empire and the establishment of Socialist Society.

Membership. The party shall consist of Members of the I. N. C. who are also members of a provincial Congress Socialist Party affiliated to the party, provided that they are not the members of any communal organization or of any other political organization whose objects and programme are in the opinion of the party inconsistent with its own organization.

There shall be an affiliated Congress Socialist Party in every Congress province, including the Indian States, consisting of persons habitually residing or doing political work in that province.

Provided that in exceptional circumstances, the executive committee shall have power to grant affiliation to a party operating in territory less or more extensive than that of a Congress province.

The provincial parties shall be affiliated on their acceptance of the objects and programme of the party except that they shall have freedom to make such additions and alterations in the immediate demands of the party as are necessary in view of the local conditions.

Provincial parties shall have power to frame rules for the conduct of their affairs provided such rules are not inconsistent with the constitution of the party.

Every provincial party shall levy a membership fee of Four annas of which it shall contribute 25% to the funds of the party provided that in no case shall this contribution be less than Rs 10 per annum.

Annual Special Sessions.

The party shall meet annually. The time and place shall be fixed by the Executive committee.

The Secretary shall call a special conference of the party when directed to do so by the Executive committee or on the requisition of at least three provincial parties. The time and place shall be decided by the executive committee.

Decisions of the annual and special sessions of the party shall be binding on all affiliated parties and their members.

Annual Report.

The General Secretary shall, in consultation with the Executive committee, prepare a report of work of the party during the year and circulate it to provincial parties at least a month prior to the date of the annual conference and submit it to the Annual Conference.

Auditing of Accounts.

The Secretary shall submit audited accounts of the party to the Annual conference. The Auditor shall be appointed by the Executive committee.

Delegation.

Provincial parties shall be represented on the basis of one delegate for every ten members and the delegate or delegates shall have the right to cast the number of votes to which their parties are entitled, in such manner as to secure proportionate representation to minorities in Executive committee.

The Executive committee of the party shall be elected by the Annual conference and shall consist of one general and four Jt. Secretaries and twelve other members. Five

substitute members shall also be elected to take the place of absent members in rotation. Vacancies during the year shall be filled up by the Executive committee.

Quorum of the Executive Committee

Eight members shall form the quorum of the Executive Committee.

Disciplinary Action.

The Executive committee shall have power to take disciplinary action by way of suspension of a provincial party or any member thereof subject to ratification by the next conference of the party provided that such decision is taken by a 2/3rd majority.

The Executive committee shall also have power to review and revise cases of suspension and expulsion of members by provincial party on application by the members concerned.

The Annual conference of the party shall have power to disaffiliate a provincial party or expel any member there-of.

Rules.

The Executive Committee shall have power to frame rules not inconsistent with the constitution of the party.

Constitutional Amendment.

Amendment to the constitution or the programme of the party can only be made at a conference of the party by a 2/3rds majority.

Rules Framed by the Executive Committee.

In pursuance of the clause in the constitution empowering the Executive committee to frame rules not inconsistent with the constitution of the party the Executive Committee of the party has framed the following rules.

I. Class of Members.

There shall be in each provincial party two classes of members (a) active (b) ordinary.

Active members shall be those who actively work for the Party. Ordinary members shall be those who accept the objects and programme of the party. The Executive Committee of the provincial party shall prepare and from time to time revise the list of active members of the party.

II Admission of Members.

1. Admission to the party shall be by application according to the prescribed form and the payment of the subscription.

2. The application shall be scrutinized by the Branch Executive of the party, which may admit the applicant to probationary membership or reject the application. Probationers shall have all the responsibilities of the membership of the party but no right of voting.

3. The Branch Executive shall have power to refuse applications without giving reasons provided that such applications shall be forwarded to the Provincial Executive.

4. In considering applications the Branch Executive shall scrutinize the record of the applicant.

5. No person may be admitted

(a) who is a member of any communal organization;

(b) who is a member of any other political organization whose objects and programme are in the opinion of the party inconsistent with its own ;

(c) who has been suspended or expelled from another provincial party except with the previous permission of the Executive of that party or of the All India Executive.

6. The Branch Executive shall forward the application for membership to the Provincial Executive with full particulars of the member and his record.

APPENDIX IV.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE MEETS

A meeting of the National Executive of the All India Congress Socialist Party was held in Delhi from September 19, to September 24, 1946. The Executive addressed itself to the task of reorganizing the party in the light of the new crystalization of nationalist forces and set before itself the objective of converting this popular movement into an irresistible organization. The deliberations concluded on the 24th September after decisions had been taken on numerous important organizational and general issues and resolutions about R. I. N.—calling upon the Interim Government to redress the grievances of the victimised nationalists—, Indians abroad—requesting the Interim Government to take such action as will enable Asiatic and African people to establish for themselves sovereign national freedom within their territories—and Goa—urging the intervention of the Interim Government—were passed. It was also decided to hold an All India Congress Socialist Conference in United Provinces, Commencing on the 30th December 1946. Mr. Achyut Patwardhan was elected the New General Secretary of the A. I. C. S. P. in place of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, who tendered his resignation, having joined the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain had joined the Working Committee, early in the month in response to Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru's appeal to preserve solidarity in the Congress ranks and strengthen the organization. His joining the Working Committee however did not mean quitting the Congress Socialist Party.

A. I. C. C. Session.

The A. I. C. C. met in Delhi early in the last week of September 1946. The official agenda was unusually brief and included only two resolutions, the first of Azad asking for ratification of the Congress

participation in the Interim Government and the second of Pt. Govindh Vallabh Pant saying that "No one would be debarred from the membership of the Working Committee or any other body of the Congress on account of holding office in the Interim Government."

At its last meeting held in Bombay the A. I. C. C. had accepted only the long term proposals of the British Cabinet Delegation and declared the Interim arrangements to be unacceptable. The President Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru had declared in unmistakable term that the Congress acceptance of the Constituent Assembly did not mean the acceptance of all the terms and conditions laid down in the statement of May 16. This position was however revised by the Working Committee in its meeting held in Wardha and the statement was accepted in its entirety,—a thing undemocratic which enabled the Congress president to be invited by the Governor General to form Government at the centre. The A. I. C. C. was thus again confronted with a *fait accompli* as it had been last in Bombay.

Mr. Acnyut Patwardhan moved an ammedment to Moulana Azad's resolution directing the Congress representatives to create conditions by such means as removal of British troops to endow the constitution making body with sovereignty and thereby transcend the limitations imposed by the British cabinet delegation's statement of May 16, and further to transform the new Central Government into an instrument of Sovereign power. The amendment though technically unobjectionable was ruled out of order by the President, leaving thus three alternatives before the members, to vote for, to vote against, or remain neutral in voting on the Resolution. The Majority of the members voted in the favour of the resolution while the Socialists remained neutral.

This attitude of Neutrality was not the product of Indecision. As was pointed out by Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, Neutrality was a positive policy. To vote against would have meant that the socialists wanted the withdrawal of the Congress Representatives from the Interim

Government, which would be nothing but lowering the Prestige of the Congress To vote for, that the Socialists aligned themselves with the Policy of constitutionalism, which they did not and hence the Neutrality.

Pt. Pant's resolution was however vehemently opposed. The arguments of the opposition were based on sound logic and not mere sentimentalism like those of the supporters. The opposition which was in fact led by the veteran leader Moulana Azad pointed how freedom remained still to be won, and the common membership of Government and the Congress Working Committee would modify that perspective. The Congress organization must have its face turned to the people ; it must draw strength from their hopes and struggles. There is the danger of the Congress yielding to the exigencies of administration if the highest Committee of the Congress is loaded with administrators and forgets to respond to the inchoate calls and urges of the people. The resolution was however passed finally by 185 to 89 votes.

The session thus came to an end with both the resolutions passed by the A. I. C. C. Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali thought the proceedings to be nothing but play-acting and mere show.

End.

